

# Every Rose Has It's Thorns

by Celestial Angel

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Summary: The fourth chapter has been added! This is where everything comes to a head. The cast has been assembled. Find out what happens! Oh, and of course, please review!

## 1. Prolouge

> <meta name="ProgId"> Every Rose Has Its Thorns

Every Rose Has Its Thorns

By: Celestial Angel

**\*\*Disclaimer:** Everything Digimon is property of Saban, Toei, and Bandai. Celeste is mine. That's about all, I guess. Basically, the only things that are mine are Celeste and the basic plot. K? Well, that's all for the disclaimer.\*\*

**\*\***

**\*\*Author's Note:** Well, not much to say here, except for the obvious fact that this is a Mimato fanfic. Other than that, various people will drop in to give Mimi advice. Oh, by the way, the man mentioned in the first part is not, I repeat IS NOT Matt. Got that? Good. Also, this story is in no way related to Rainy Day, if you're wondering. Oh, and the part where it says 'scene change', it's actually a hallucination.\*\*

**\*\***

**\*\*\***

All she could do was cry. That's the only thing she could do as her fiancÃ© advanced on her. She gently put a small hand to her cheek where a stinging blow had left its harsh mark; she knew that a large ugly bruise was forming there. She already had a black eye. It would take a lot of makeup to cover this one up. She winced slightly as her

hand grazed the extremely sore spot. She felt a warm, sticky liquid flowing from the corner of her mouth and she wiped it away with the back of her hand. She knew what it wasâ€¦blood.

She looked up again to see her fiancÃ©e almost ontop of her, his green eyes ablaze with rage, her own chocolate brown ones wide with fear. She screamed at the top of her lungs, her voice reflecting only a small portion of the sheer terror she felt.

He reached out and grabbed her arm at the elbow. She cried out with pain; his grip felt like a vise, harsh, cold, unfeeling.

" Shut up!" he yelled harshly as he backhanded her across the face again, slammed her head violently against the wall three times, and dropped her roughly to the floor.

She let herself fall back against the wall, her head landing with a thump against the drywall, leaving a large bright red spot on the blue paint . She slid to the side and let herself fall to the floor as blackness took over and a single crystalline teardrop found its way down to the plush white carpet.

\*\*\*

# Scene Changeâ€¦|

She giggled like a giddy school girl as her boyfriend swept her off her feet and carried through the park like a groom would carry his bride over the threshold, except there was no threshold, just a root on which she had sprained her foot.

She pretended to scream with terror, but instead it came out as a scream of delight.

" Oh! Help me!" she screamed, laughing all the while, " stop you fiend!" she screamed as she pounded her small fists on his back.

He turned his head to her ear and whispered, " I don't think so," he said, smiling.

" Stop, Frank, you can put me down now," she said.

" Nah," Frank said, " I'm having too much fun."

She frowned at him, then her frown turned to a pout. " Please," she pleaded.

He looked at her face and tried to appear stern, but eventually he broke down. " All right," he relinquished, " but not right now. Let me carry you to the lake, then I'll put you down. Okay? Deal."

She looked back at him. " Frank," she began, " people are looking at us."

He looked off into the distance, " So let them look," he said to the tall trees surrounding them. He looked back at her, his mouth twisted into a pout. " Please," he said using her own trick against her.

She couldn't resist that. " Oh fine," she said acquiescing. " Go ahead."

He smiled at her and proceeded to carry her the short distance to the lake.

\*\*\*

The sun reflecting off the surface of the lake gave it the appearance of having a surface made of thousands of diamonds, each little one shining as bright as a star. The sun was high in the cloudless sky, its rays shining like shafts through the canopy of trees surrounding the lake. A slight breeze wound its way through the trees and found its way to the lake.

\*\*\*

She let out a soft sigh as she watched her long chestnut bangs ruffle in the wind like ribbons. She let her chocolate brown eyes close as she imagined herself out on the lake, but instead of water, she was swimming in a sea of diamonds. It may have seemed like an irrelevant fantasy, but it had always been a wild fantasy of hers, not that she could afford it in her financial state.

She leaned against a metal rail, her back to the lake. " Why?" she asked herself. " Why did it have to happen to me? What did I ever do to deserve this sorrow, this pain?" She shook her head slightly. Even after their triumphant return from the digiworld, her life still didn't return to normal.

She and her family had moved to the east coast of America; she had rarely seen her friends. She only got to when she got to visit Japan. When she did get to go though, there was always a DigiDestined Reunion, and that included the 3 new good digidestined as well.

She smiled to herself as she thought wryly, \* Those kids don't know what they're in for\* Of course, with Kari and T.K. joining Daisuke, Miyako and Iori, they could at least guess as to what the evil Kaiser would do next. Anyway, back to the DigiDestined Reunion.

One of the times, everyone had met at Tai's apartment. Everyone had been there, including the new DigiDestined. Usually they were on alert constantly, having to escape to DigiWorld to foil the plans of the Kaiser. Anyway, as mentioned before, everyone had gathered at Tai's apartment for the reunion. Kari had heard that for once, everyone would be in Japan so she planned the party. Kari had everyone except Mimi and Matt and T.K. bring some kind of food. Mimi simply brought some stuff from New York ( Sorry, I don't know exactly where she lives when she moves. Gomen \*\_\*;;) for them. T.K. had been in charge of getting the new digidestined informed of the gathering, and Matt convinced his band to join the party and maybe to play some music. As it turned out they couldn't because the neighbors started their ranting before the band even got through the first song, so the members of the band just stuck around and enjoyed the party.

Matt had introduced the band members when they had arrived. He had mentioned that one of the members, Frank Wirani was leaving Japan and moving to New York.

Mimi's heart jumped at this. Here was Frank, (who is the same guy she's now engaged to by the way), a hot guy who had a seemingly great personality, and a tie to her friends, and he was moving to New York.

Maybe she would get to see him sometime, and she did.

Her thoughts drifted back to the present and the sparkling lake. She looked over to the nearby pavilion, and saw Frank leaning on the whitewashed railing. He was looking out over the water, the sparkles reflecting in his green eyes. His eyes were so deep that she would get lost in them if she wasn't careful. One lock of his raven black hair kept falling in his eyes in a way that somehow reminded her of Mattâ€¦

\*Stop it!\* she yelled at herself. \* He's gone, you left him behind and there is no way that you are ever going to get to see him again. Why would you want to see \_him again?\* she asked herself. \* Why would you want to see him again after wht he did?\*\_

—

She shook her head. "No," she whispered out loud. " not, I'm not going to think of that now. It's a beautiful day and I've got a great guy who loves me. I'm not going to put myself down."

She looked back at Frank again. He was lean but well muscled, and that made him not the type of person to get angry.

She cringed at this. She had thought about what she would do if he ever hurt her. Without Palmon and without fighting skills of any sort and lacking in natural physical strength, there would be no way to fight back. \* No!\* her mind screamed. \* He would never do that! He loves me! He truly does!\*

\*\_Keep telling yourself that\*, a familiar voice whispered to her mind. \*\_ Be ready to run. \*\_\_

—

She closed her eyes; she knew how to respond to that. \*\_Why?\* She thought.\_\_

—

\*\_You will know soon,\* answered the voice, \*\_but remember this, I will be there to help you. I will make sure you get through this. No matter what it takesâ€¦\*\_

—

\*\_Thank you Celeste\* she answered, \*\_ I will remember.\*\_\_

—

She opened her eyes and stared back out at the lake. The breeze was blowing harder now and it sent a shower of leaves from nearby trees around her, some hitting her gently. Her thoughts flew through her mind like the leaves on the wind. \* What are you talking about Celeste?\* she asked herself. \* Why would I have to run? Tell me.\* She waited for an answer but was disappointed when she received none. She thought about Celeste. She was a mysterious being who had appeared to the DigiDestined many times throughout their journey in the DigiWorld to help them correct the disturbances in the dimensions or something like that. Mimi knew that Celeste was probably helping the new

digidestined as well. Even after the old digidestineds' return from the Digiworld, she still kept in contact all of them, but more so with Mimi than with the others. Still though, Mimi never let the others know about this, so far, no one knew about this except for her. Her continual contact with Celeste was her little secret.

Many times, Celeste provided her with bits and pieces of helpful information, and more often than not, her information had been right on. Mimi had been more than grateful for that, but this time, she couldn't help thinking that this time, Celeste was dead wrong about something. The thought message had come when she had thought about Frank. Did that mean that she would have to run from Frank?

She instantly dismissed the thought. \*Nah, he'd never hurt me.\*

Just as she thought that, the world around her turned seven shades brighter. She closed her eyes against the sun which before, was mildly bright, but now, even through her closed eyelids, the sun pierced through like thousands of mini icepicks. Gradually, she got used to the light, but when she opened them, she expected to find herself in the park still, and she did, but the park was no longer as she remembered it. Rather though, it was as though she had been transported to a similar park on another world.

"Celeste?" she called out. "Are you doing this?" she asked, hoping that her friend was just playing a joke on her. She stood in silence for a few minutes and waited for an answer. When it became clear that she wasn't going to get one, she began to take notice of her surroundings.

The lake was as she had remembered it, except for the fact that it was now filled with a dark red liquid that resembled blood. The wind, which was still blowing, still sent multitudes of leaves cascading around her, but this time, when they hit, they did not hit gently, but rather, each one felt as though they were a hundred pound weights hitting her with the same force as though they'd been thrown at her, others cutting her like knives. She backed away but encountered the railing again. She put one hand on the railing for balance, and tried to use the other one to shield herself somewhat from the "leaves", but the effort was futile. They kept coming. After a few moments of this, she knew that she was covered in a multitude of bleeding cuts and soon to be bruises.

She looked over to where the pavilion was supposed to be; it was still there, and Frank was standing just where she remembered. He didn't seem to notice any change in scenery or anything; he just kept looking straight ahead at the lake.

"Help me, Frank!" she screamed.

For a moment, it seemed as though he didn't hear her, so she shouted again. "Frank!" she cried.

This time, she knew he heard her because he turned and looked directly at her. She knew he saw that she was being hurt, but he looked at her once, then he sneered evilly at her before turning and walking away, leaving her, deserting her.

"No!" she screamed as she removed her hand from the railing and used that hand to reach out towards him as though she could make him stay

and help her just by thought alone. It failed completely, but the moment that he was out of sight, the harsh blows stopped, and she looked up not knowing what to expect.

When she looked up towards the sky, she found that the abnormal sun had now expanded and filled the entire sky, changing it from a lovely soothing blue, to a dark blood red.

She pondered this for a second, but she couldn't continue because of an intense crushing pain that descended upon her head. She fell to the ground, clutching wildly at her head with her bleeding hands, desperate to find some way to stop the horrendous pain. She didn't know how to stop it, but she stopped when her hand encountered something warm, wet, sticky.

Despite the intense pain, she brought her hand to her face in an effort to discover what the liquid was. It was dark red blood.

(\*\*Author's Note (A.N.)-Geez, there's a lot of blood in this no?)

\*\*

\* \*

"What?" she managed to whisper to herself despite the intense pain.

She felt herself growing faint; she knew she was going to black out. The last thing she saw before blacking out was a pure white light breaking through the blood red dome and the light surrounding and enveloping everything.

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## 2. Episode 1: Reality Revealed

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# Every Rose Has Its Thorns

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**\*\*Disclaimer: Digimon belongs to Saban and Toei. The song lyrics are from Savage Garden's "Two Beds and a Coffee Machine" and they are property of Savage Garden and Columbia Records. Celeste belongs to me, and Natalie too. Well, I guess that's all.\*\***

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**\*\*Author's Note:** Okay, well, just to let you all know€|again. This is in no way related to Rainy Day. Also, for you Yamato fans two things. First, please bear with me, even though he seems not to play a big part in this part, but he plays a major part in part two.

\_And we've even got a patient, who would fit the description of the witness here, the nurse thought, somewhat terrified. She tried to

concentrate on the paperwork in front of her. \_All right, she told herself, \_the patient's name goes here. She wrote something in the blank box. \_Patient's address goes here. She filled the address in the blank box, and she continued trying to complete the form in front of her, but her mind still wandered.\_\_\_\_

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\_That poor woman, what was her name? Oh yeah, Mimi Tachikawa, the model. Poor thing. Looks like she won't be modeling anytime soon. The nurse propped her elbow up on the desktop and rested her head on her hand. \_I just can't believe anybody would beat her like that. Especially her fiancÃ©e. It's so awful. She felt herself getting angry at the thought. \_Oh, I hope they catch him soon. He deserves to be put in jail for a long time. He'd probably be charged with assault and attempted murder, seeing as what state she's in. Her life's on the edge, teetering on the brink of death. She's probably not going to make it without a miracle.\_\_\_\_

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### She lifted her head up and looked back down at the paperwork, trying, again, to get her mind off of the situation, but once again she was unsuccessful. A few minutes later, she found herself back on the same train of thought again.

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Unexpectedly breaking the prolonged silence, she heard a loud, clamorous noise from down an adjacent hallway. Chills raced up and down her spine. She froze, scared to breathe, scared to make a sound. \_Could that be him? She thought fearfully. She listened for what seemed to be an eternity for another sound. At one point, she heard what sounded to be footsteps, but when she listened after that, she heard nothing more. \_Okay, she thought, \_ I'm letting my imagination get the best of me. There's no one here except for me. Calm down, calm down. Breathe. She kept repeating in her mind. She managed to calm down a little bit, but not much. She was trembling like a leaf. She sat and tried to go back to her paperwork again, telling herself that she was not going to get it done if she kept sitting and listening like that. She did return to filling out paperwork, but still kept an ear out for sounds and an eye on the red phone next to her that automatically alerted security if there was any trouble.\_\_\_\_

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In a couple of minutes, she had the first set of forms done, and was now starting on the second. \_There we go she thought \_not so hard, now is it? Just three more stacks to go.\_\_\_\_

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She began filling in various things on the second set. Patient's name, address, phone number, etc. She had almost completely forgotten the fears she had earlier, but they soon reasserted themselves in a horrifying way.

She was filling in the back of a form, when she suddenly felt a warm puff of breath against her neck. She jumped up from her seat and let



out a short-lived  
scream.

[illegible]

\* \*

Natalie Willis, a teenage volunteer at the hospital, made her way silently through the halls of the hospital's ICU ward. She had to deliver the papers she had in her hand to the nurse at the nurse's station nearest to Ms. Tachikawa's room. The papers were essential. It was a notice to the nurse that Frank Wirani was indeed out of custody on bail. The papers also said that if she were to see him, if he did come to visit Mimi, not to let him see her, to do whatever it takes to keep him away from her, call security, call for help, fight him hand-to-hand if need be, anything. Because, if he did get to her, there was no way to know what he'd do.

Natalie knew the nurse on duty had a habit of letting her mind wander and letting her imagination get away with her. It would be no surprise to Natalie, if the nurse was daydreaming when she got there.

Natalie worried for Mimi; they had been friends for so long. Natalie knew what was going to happen, and she also knew that she had better get down to the ICU ward A.S.A.P. if she was going to save Mimi. She quickened her already fast pace to nearly an all out run.

\* \* \*

The elevator journey down to the ICU ward was unbearably long, but Natalie somehow resisted the overwhelming urge to stop the elevator at the next floor and bolt down the stairs.

When she did get down to the ward, she found that it was unusually quiet. Thoughts raced through her mind at a hundred miles per second. \_Well, there's any number of things that could've happened. Only four possibilities made it through her wall of logic. \_ One, the nurse was asleep, two, the nurse was daydreaming as usual, three, the nurse had gone to check on Mimi, or four, the worst of the choices, Frank had returned and the nurse was incapacitated or dead.\_

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Natalie, fearing the worst, quickened her pace down the hallway towards the nurses' station.

She got almost all the way down the hall when she accidentally bumped into a cart on the side of the hallway sending a bowl and a few packaged instruments clattering to the tile floor. She was bending down to pick it up when she heard a slight noise down at the end of the hall, that sounded like a gasp. She hurriedly picked up the bowl and the packages, placed them on top of the cart and continued making her way silently down the hallway.

About a minute after she had knocked over the bowl, she heard papers shuffling, and she immediately dismissed the possibility that Frank had returned. The nurse had probably just let her imagination run away with her.

Natalie resumed her previous pace until she reached the end of the hallway, that's when she began tiptoeing around, so as hopefully, not to startle the nurse too much. She peeked around a corner and saw the nurse hunched over her desk doing paperwork, and immediately knew that everything was fine. \_Okay, she thought, \_now that I know she's okay, I've just got to give her the papers. \_

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Natalie walked to the open door that led to the nurses' station. Unfortunately, there was a problem. The nurse's back faced the door, and, she still seemed unaware of Natalie's presence. Nevertheless, Natalie walked up behind the nurse, and drew in a breath to speak when the nurse abruptly bolted up from her seat and screamed.

The nurse's jump surprised Natalie, making her lose her balance and thereby causing her to fall backwards. The nurse, on the other hand, screamed for about a second before seeing Natalie sitting on the floor.

" Natalie!" the nurse yelled breathlessly. "It was you?!"

"Yes, it was," Natalie said calmly as she stood up. " I have to deliver these papers to you." She held out some folded white papers to the nurse, who was fuming.

" Give them to me," the nurse demanded angrily as she snatched the papers from Natalie's hand. She didn't even bother to read them; she just dropped them on top of the other paperwork on her desk. "Natalie! How many times have I told you not to sneak up on anyone!" the nurse reprimanded.

"I didn't sneak up on anyone, Natalie countered, " I just walked in the room, and you simply didn't acknowledge my presence. So, in reality, you're just as guilty as I am."

The nurse fumed some more at this, but eventually, Natalie's logic won out. " Yeah, I guess you're right, but just don't ever do that again. All right?"

" Agreed," said Natalie as the nurse frowned at her. \_ Can't this girl ever relax? She asked herself. \_Don't hold your breath. She reminded herself.\_

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"Also," said Natalie, " Doctor Foster wants a current report on Ms. Tachikawa's condition. Is there any overall change?"

"No," replied the nurse, " she's still in the coma and shows no sign of coming out of it any time soon."

" How long has she been in the coma?"

" About four months."

"How is the head wound?"

"Same as last. It's almost healed."

" Any change in stats?"

" None whatsoever."

"Any notable changes?"

The nurse considered the question. " Well, her vital signs haven't fluctuated. The haven't improved or gotten worse, but they're all in the green. The only things not normal, are her brain functions. Her synapses aren't firing normally. Other than that, she's completely healthy."

"Let's hope she will be," Natalie whispered under her breath. She looked back up at the nurse who was studying her questioningly as though she had heard what she had said, but the nurse then asked, " What's with the papers you brought me?" She asked as she picked up the neatly folded papers and unfolded them.

As she studied the papers, an occasional sound escaped her lips. " Hmmâ€| "

"What?" Natalie asked cautiously.

" Well, for some reason I already knew this, but thank you for letting me know. Anything else?"

"Yes, Doctor Foster says she wants a written report as well."

" I'll get on it right away."

"Thanksâ€|" Natalie said as her voice trailed off. She stared into the distance as though she could see something coming, even through the walls.

The nurse remained silent for a second, unsure of whether or not to speak, but then she queried, " Natalie, what is it? What's wrong?"

"Shh!" Natalie chided. "I think I hear something."

The nurse's eyes widened at that. " What do you hear Natalie? What is it?"

Natalie replied, her voice barely above a whisper, " I don't know. It sounds like footsteps." She narrowed her eyes as though that would help her identify the sound.

The nurse was now on edge. " Natalie! You're not just trying to scare me are you Natalie? Cause if you areâ€|"

"No," Natalie responded almost immediately. " I really think I hear something coming. Now be quiet and let me concentrate!" The nurse immediately stopped talking and tried to concentrate on the sound herself. At first, she heard nothing, and she began to question Natalie's sanity, wanting say that she was hearing things. But then, her ears caught a hint of a sound. At first, it was so faint, that she doubted hearing it, but eventually, as she concentrated on it, it became louder and more pronounced. Natalie was right! Someone was coming! It was all the nurse could do to keep herself from thinking

that it was Ms. Tachikawa's fiancée. She stood and listened to it for about a minute longer. She was so intent on listening to that sound, that she didn't realize that Natalie was speaking to her. She shook herself out of her mental daze just in time to hear Natalie say, "I don't come back, call security immediately. Got me?"

"No," said the nurse, "what'd you say again?"

"I said, I'm going to go and see who it is. If I don't come back in a reasonable amount of time, call security immediately. Got me?"

"How much time do you think you need?"

Natalie considered this for a moment before responding, "About ten minutes cause I'll be sneaking around."

"All right," the nurse said. As Natalie turned to leave, the nurse added, "Natalie, be careful."

Natalie remained with her back to the nurse, but she answered with a barely audible voice, "I will." With that, she sneaked out of the tiny room, leaving the nurse alone and wondering.

\*\*\*

Natalie cautiously peered around a corner to see if there was indeed an intruder even though she knew that in reality, there wasn't one at all. Rather, the footsteps the nurse had heard, was actually a product of her own imagination and Natalie had just played on that weakness. It was that simple.

Still, Natalie kept tiptoeing. She wished she didn't have to, but Natalie knew that if the nurse heard anything out of the ordinary, she would call security, so she knew that she must keep quiet.

All right, she thought enough of this. It's time to get this underway. With that, she rounded the corner and began to run silently through the long, deserted hallways. She had to hurry. In fact, she had to get to Mimi's room in under four minutes to be able to help her. She checked the cheap watch on her wrist. It read 3:26 A.M. She was right. She had four minutes to get to Mimi's room and to do so, she had to pass by the nurse's station which meant going back the way she came. She managed to keep running silently as she quickened her pace to a humanly impossible speed.

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The nurse looked at the large clock on the wall. It read 3:26 A.M. Natalie's ten minutes were almost up. She tried to sit still, but was unable to keep from fidgeting. Somehow she resisted the urge to lunged for the phone. She tried to calm herself down by thinking what she would do when she got off work. "I'm going to relax in a nice hot bath before I hit the sack. Then, when I wake up, I'm going to have a nice dinner. Since I'm off tonight, I might go out with my boyfriend. Maybe he'll propose to me tonight! That thought cheered her, but that cheer was soon dispelled by another thought that entered her mind. What if I never get off work? What if Ms. Tachikawa's fiancée is

really here? What if he's going to kill us? What if? What if? She glanced at the clock again. It read 3:28 A.M. \_ Come on Natalie! Hurry up!\_\_\_\_

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Natalie paused at the door of the nurse's station and glanced at her watch. It read 3:28 A.M. \_

—

\_ No! her mind screamed. \_ I don't have enough time! I've gotta do it even though my superiors are going to hate me! She paused a second to regain her wits. \_All right, here goes! And she said with her mind: \_ Guardian of Time, hear my plea, slow time's flow on the count of three! One! Two! Three! \_\_\_\_

—

Almost immediately after saying those words, Natalie noticed the difference in the time flow. She felt as though the world was standing still and as though she was the only one moving. \_Good. She thought. \_ The change was implemented. Thank you my friends! \_\_\_\_

—

Without another word, she bolted down the hallway towards Ms. Tachikawa's room.

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In what would've been another four minutes later, Natalie was standing in front of Mimi's room. She slowly opened the door tiptoed into the room, and softly shut the door behind her. She took a moment to survey the room. Here, the effects of the Time Stop were more prominent, for one could actually see it. A drop of fluid that was to go to her IV had stopped in mid-fall, and the constantly beeping heart monitor looked as though someone had painted a picture on it. Natalie shook herself free of the thoughts and checked her watch again. It read 3:29 A.M. \_I'm cutting it awfully close, she thought, \_but I must have the spell reversed now! She paused. \_ Here goes! Guardian of Time here my plea, resume time's flow on the count of three! one! two! three! \_\_\_\_

—

Again, immediately, things returned to normal, the IV continued to drip and the monitor continued to beep as though nothing had changed. Without wasting another second, Natalie walked over to the bed where Mimi lay and silently placed her hands on the sleeping woman's head in a way known only to a few and she thought \_Mimi? Mimi where are you?\_

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For a second, the nurse felt as though she were going to pass out, but she managed to catch her self before she did.

\_ Wow, she thought, \_ what happened? It felt likeâ€|like time stopped, or something like thatâ€|\_\_

—

She would've continued down that train of thought, but another thought nagged at her mind. She glanced up at the clock; it read 3:29 A.M. and the second hand had almost completed it's round. In about fifteen more seconds, it did indeed complete the round. The clock now read 3:30 A.M.

\_Natalie, the nurse thought, \_time's up. She reached over for the phone, her mind filled with exactly what she was going to tell security, but an instant before her hand reached the phone, another sound came into play.\_\_

—

The computer terminal at her desk began beeping with an intermittent beeping that was loud enough to wake the dead. The nurse hesitated at the phone for a second before sprinting over to the terminal which was on the other side of the tiny room. She swiveled the monitor to face her, but when she saw what all the commotion was about, the color drained from her face. She didn't even get a chance to respond as her instincts took over, the nursing instincts that she had had to bury for so long were finally coming to the fore. She quickly moved over to the other side of the terminal and pressed a large red button on an intercom. She opened her mouth to speak, and when she did speak, her voice came out panicked, but still as clear as ever.

" Attention! Attention! Code Blue in the ICU ward! Doctor Foster to the ICU stat! Mimi Tachikawa is under cardiac arrest! I repeat! Code Blue in the ICU ward!"

\*\*\*

Mimi had no idea where she was. One minute she had been in an unusual park and now here she was, nowhere. She felt as though she was floating somewhere between consciousness and unconsciousness, tucked away safely in a little part of her mind. Even though everything was dark, it didn't bother her. The darkness was warm and comforting, it wrapped her in a protective cocoon, cradling her mind like a mother would a baby. She didn't want this to end, she was happy here. Thoughts and memories floated around in her mind, past, present, future? She couldn't tell, they were all mixed together in a large jumble. She saw her time at the camp, so many years ago before she and her friends had been sucked into Digiworld, before they had met the digimon, before they had to leave them behindâ€| Palmon's face floated around in her thoughts. Oh how she missed Palmon, the loyal Digimon who had become her friend and confidante, whom Mimi trusted with her life, but when they had been denied permission to stay in Digiworld, and after their request to return had been refused, she had lost all hope of ever seeing Palmon again. Her friends. She still had her friends, but she had lost contact with all of them over the years. She didn't know, and truthfully, right now, they didn't matter at all. She was safe and happy; that's what she cared about right now, being safe and happy.

So, understandably, she was upset when a bright light came washing over her, dissipating the darkness, sending the comfort rushing away from her. She managed to open her eyes, and what she saw somewhat startled her. Floating directly in front of her, was a huge replica of the symbol for Sincerity and out of that emanated the radiant light that had destroyed the darkness.

\_What? She thought. \_ What's happening? A few moments later, she received an answer when a woman with large angel-wings who was wearing a simple, flowing white dress that was restrained at the waist by a golden belt, stepped from the Sincerity symbol. For a moment, Mimi just stared at the newcomer, trying to figure out who she was. The woman had long blond hair that was tied in a loose ponytail at the back of her neck, and she had ice blue eyes that seemed to be peering at Mimi intently.\_\_

—

Mimi opened her mouth to ask a question, but was interrupted when the woman spoke gently with a voice that sounded as soothing a rushing waters, as fresh as the morning breeze, as placid as the sky on a cloudless night when all the stars were out, as soft and as gentle as a caress, " Mimi? Mimi where are you?"

"Right here," Mimi answered. The woman smiled at that. " Who are you?" Mimi asked suspiciously.

" Don't you recognize me, my friend?" the woman asked.

"No," Mimi answered straightforwardly.

" Maybe this will help you remember," said the woman as she procured a small device from her belt. "Catch," the woman said simply as she lightly tossed the device to a very puzzled Mimi.

Mimi caught it and proceeded to examine it. It \_was very familiar indeed. It was a digivice! A very special digivice at that! Even in all the years she hadn't seen it, she would've recognized in anywhere. It was a magenta colored digivice with small soft feathers protruding from four corners of it. Mimi clutched the digivice in a shaking fist and managed to croak weakly, "Celeste?"\_

—

The woman smiled a dazzling smile again. "Yes, Mimi. It's me. I have changed over the years as have you. I presume that is why you didn't recognize me."

"You're right about that, Celeste!" Mimi exclaimed happily, " last time I saw you, you had purple hair, and you were wearing a purple skirt and a sleeveless shirt and you had pixie wings, not angel wings. You sure have changed!"

" As have you, my friend," Celeste reiterated. Mimi guessed that she was referring to the fact that she had grown in height significantly, and that she had grown her hair out as well. " Yeah, I've gotten older, but I definitely haven't gotten wiser."

"I know." Celeste replied simply.

Mimi paused for a second, seemingly at a loss for words, but then she broke the silence and said, " Well, Celeste, it's nice to see you, but may I ask you why you are here?"

"Ah, same old Mimi that I know," Celeste paused and said under her breath, " let's hope that she \_is still the same." She looked back up at Mimi and said, " You know. Well, at least I think you do."\_

—

Mimi grimaced and looked down into the endless chasm of darkness. "Yes, I have a vague idea. You're here to take me back. Aren't you?"

\_Ah, so she does remember what happened, good, now I have a base to build on Celeste thought. \_Goodâ€|\_\_

—

Her thoughts trailed off when she heard Mimi saying, " No! Celeste, I am not going back! I will never go back! I will die first! I will never go back there! I repeat I will die first!"

"My friend," Celeste began delicately for she knew that she was treading on thin ice here. " I'm afraid thatâ€|"

"No!" Mimi practically screamed. "Stop with that 'my friend' stuff! You're not my friend if you make me go back! There is no way that a \_friend would ask me to leave this safety to go back to that harsh world! I'm safe here," she gestured with open arms to the darkness around her, " I'm happy here! Why would I ever want to leave? It would be crazy to leave!"\_

—

"Mimi! Mimi!" Celeste yelled harshly, " listen to me! You said that no friend would make you leave safety to return to danger. Well, then how can the DigiDestined be your friends? Because according to you, a friend doesn't want a person to leave safety for danger, well, they did ask you to return to Digiworld after you returned to Earth the first time, did they not?"

> Mimi was flustered, but blurted out, "No! I made that decision for myself! I decided to return on my own! No one asked me to! That doesn't count!"<o:p><o:p>

"Well then, how could you be your own friend if you asked yourself to return!?" Celeste countered.

"Well, a person can't be their own friend!" Mimi countered. " Besides, I made that decision for myself! That doesn't count either!"

"How is this any different then?" Celeste asked calmly.

Mimi paused, not sure what Celeste was asking; she just waited for Celeste to continue, and continue she did.

"I'm not forcing you to do anything," Celeste stated somewhat calmly



even though panic was edging in on her voice. She had only a short while more to convince Mimi to return until both their minds were lost forever in the darkness of the coma and the horrors of death. \_Come on Mimi Celeste thought. \_ Just trust me.\_\_

—

"You're not forcing me to return?" Mimi asked in disbelief.

"No!" Celeste stated again. " Mimi, now listen to me, you do not have a lot of time to ponder this, you must make a decision now! You don't have much time, your body is on life support right now. Your mind has to reassert itself and take over body functions if you want to live. Mimi, if you don't make your decision now, you \_will die. And no, I'm not threatening you, I'm just telling you what is going to happen. That is all."\_

—

Mimi was silent with disbelief. " You mean, that if I don't make a decision now, I will," she gulped nervously, " \_die?"\_

—

"Yes," said Celeste stoically. "And I will not be able to revive you. So, as you see, you must make a decision. Will you die or will you live? What will it be?"

Mimi paused in indecision. Both thoughts were hideous to her. Dying meant die and never to return, but living meant torture, both physical and emotional. It was horrible compared to this, but then again, dying was too. As said before, both were equally horrible. She couldn't decide.

Her thoughts were interrupted when Celeste spoke, " Mimi, do you remember the last time I visited \_you in person?"\_

—

Mimi thought for a couple of seconds, her mind searching through years of memories. Finally, she said, "Yes, I remember, it was just before we actually took on the Dark Masters, during our first days back in Digiworld. I had felt somewhat unneeded in the group and I was trying to decide whether or not to leave and start off on my own. Maybe even find Gennai and maybe convince him to return me to the real world. I remember."

" Do you remember what I told you?"

"I remember exactly."

"What did I say?"

"You said, 'Trust me'."

"Yes, that's what I said. And now, Mimi, I'm asking you to trust me just one more time. Trust me in this. Go back. Return to consciousness. Despite the initial terror and circumstances, it \_will

be worth it. Trust me. I know. Times will be trying, I'm not going to lie, it will be hard, but it will be worth it." Celeste's solemn face took on a sly smile. " Besides, if you die, \_someone will \_really miss you."\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

"You mean?"

"Yes."

Mimi considered all the things that Celeste had told her, and weighed the consequences of each decision. Finally, she spoke.

"Celeste."

"Yes."

"I've decided."

"What did you decide?"

"I've decided," she paused for an uncertain second. " I've decided, to return."

Celeste's face lit up. "That's just great! Now, we don't have much time! Quickly, I know that this might sound stupid, but it's worked before for me. You must envision yourself ascending in an elevator through the different levels of your mind until you reach the very top. Then you must envision yourself getting off and staying there. Then, before you know it, you'll be awake and you should have control of your body again. Okay?"

"Sure, I'll do it. But Celeste, tell me, I once heard that love is like a rose. Is it true?"

"Yes," said Celeste. She paused before saying, "Here, catch." Celeste threw a beautiful red rose to Mimi.

Mimi reached out to catch it, but when her fingers closed around the stem, she dropped the rose into the pit below her. She watched it fall, end over end, tumbling into the unending darkness. She looked back up at Celeste, waiting for her to speak, and sure enough she did.

Celeste fabricated another rose, and gently fingered the soft, silky petals. She held the rose in front of her face, but then looked over the rose so that she could see Mimi's face. Celeste studied the rose as she spoke, but occasionally looked back at Mimi.

" Yes, love is like a beautiful rose at full bloom, but remember this Mimi." She threw the rose over to Mimi this time, Mimi caught it and did not drop it. "Every rose, has its thorns."

Mimi paused for a moment before saying, "Thank you, Celeste."

"You're welcome. Now, you must be going. Time is of the essence."

"Yes, I will go now. Bye Celeste, and thank you again."

" Goodbye, my friend. I will see you soon."

Celeste vanished in a flash of light as Mimi "ascended" through the various levels of her mind.

\*\*\*

The young nurse ran through the hallways to Ms. Tachikawa's room. She had wanted to do something other than fill out paperwork, but this was \_not what she had in mind. She just hoped that she would be able to get to the room in time to be able to help Ms. Tachikawa. She quickened her pace.\_

—

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She got to the room a short while later and she burst in the door, ready to begin CPR, but when she looked in the room, she nearly fainted with surprise.

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That light was a bit too bright for Mimi's taste, but she had to deal with it nonetheless, so she moved her hand to wipe her eyes, her muscles punishing her for every move she made. She kept trying though. She began to massage her eyes, but stopped when something hard made contact with her face.

\_What's this? Mimi thought. She opened her eyes, just enough so that she could look at the back of her hand. She had an IV in her hand, that's what the hard thing was.\_

—

She somehow managed to open her eyes all the way, and when she did, she found herself staring at the ceiling. \_No surprise she thought dryly.\_

—

She slowly turned her head to one side, her body, again, punishing her for moving. \_ I must have been laying this way for a long time, she thought. She managed to get a good look at the room, correction, the hospital room. She turned her head back to the position it had been in before, and the muscles felt a bit better because of it. \_ All right, she thought, \_I'm going to sit up whether my body wants me to or not; I'm going to do it.\_\_\_\_

—

She took a moment to gather her will and her courage, before slowly and carefully propping herself halfway up on her right elbow. The muscles in her back ached and she winced in response. Slowly, she moved so that she could prop herself up on her left elbow. She did so, her muscles protesting even louder than before, but she managed to get herself propped all the way up.

\_Ow, she thought, \_man, this is really hard on my elbows. I think I'm going to have to sit all the way up.\_\_

—

Resolute, she used her elbows to push her into a sitting position, not noticing that in the process, she had disconnected something, a wire, from her chest. She looked around the room. There was a menagerie of monitors surrounding her bed, one of which displayed only a red line. Not knowing exactly what that meant, she just sat on the bed, wondering if perhaps, she should call a nurse, when unexpectedly, the door burst open and a frantic nurse practically ran into the room, huffing and puffing as though she'd just run a mile.

"Ms. Tachikawa!" she rasped breathlessly. "You'reâ€|you'reâ€|awake! And, you're alive!"

"Yes, I am," Mimi replied weakly. "Why wouldn't I be?"

The nurse was about to launch into the whole story about how she had been in a coma for the past four months and also how her heart monitor had read that her heart had stopped and that she should be dead by nowâ€|.speaking of which, how \_was she alive? The instruments said that her heart had stopped, but her she was, alive \_and awake. How could that be? The nurse said to Mimi, " Um, Ms. Tachikawa, I have to check and make sure that you're really okay, all right?"\_\_

—

"Sure, and please, call me Mimi," she answered groggily.

"All right Mimi. So, how do you feel?" the nurse asked as she walked around the bed checking the various wires and things attached to Mimi's body.

" Well," answered Mimi, " besides a killer headache and many sore muscles, I feel very well."

The nurse kept checking the wires and, and her fingers found a loose one. " Good," she replied, "Is there anything else that I need to know? Any dizziness or things like that?"

"No. Now, let me ask you a question. What happened to me? Why am I here in this hospital?"

The nurse smirked as she traced the wire to its origin. " That's two, but I'll answer them. Well, no matter how much you might not want to believe what I'm going to tell you, you must because I assure you that it is the truth. I'm just going to give you the truth plain and simple, no sugar coating. All right?"

Mimi nodded.

" Well, about four months ago, you were severely beaten by a man named Frank Wirani, your fiancÃ©e. You received a serious head injury and you fell into a coma which you've been in for the past four months. We were just about to declare you dead when your heart

started beating again and you started breathing, but you were still in the coma. If you had remained that way any longer, you would have been a lost cause. But, as it turns out, you are awake, alive, and presumably healthy. And we are glad for that." There was a moment of silence, and Mimi opened her mouth to speak, but was interrupted by the nurse who exclaimed, "Gotcha!" With an air of triumph, having completed this miniscule task, she held a loosened wire in her hand. " Here's the cause of the trouble. That's why the monitor said that her heart had stopped!" As the nurse babbled to herself and presumably to Mimi also, Mimi thought, \_I just can't believe it. I knew it, I just didn't believe it. Now that an outsider has confirmed it, I now believe that it's true. But I still can't believe it! I won't believe it! She was so confused! She had no idea what to believe, but she certainly wouldn't believe what the nurse had said, even though her story fit perfectly.\_

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A single tear slipped down her cheek and splattered on the white, cotton bed sheet. She was shocked with disbelief and was about to just tell the nurse that she was wrong even though in her head, Mimi knew that she was indeed right. She opened her mouth to speak, but was again interrupted, this time by a horde of doctors and nurses rushing in the room. She just smiled at them as their jaws hit the ground.

A woman who with brown hair and glasses, whom Mimi presumed was a doctor, stepped forward towards the nurse and Mimi.

"What's going on here?" she asked as she glanced at the loosened wire in the nurse's hand.

"Well, Doctor Foster," began the nurse, "when I was alerted that Mimiâ€|uh, Ms. Tachikawa was under cardiac arrest, I immediately called for help, then I ran to her room and when I burst in, she was sitting up in bed, completely awake and alive."

Doctor Foster glared at the nurse curiously, " If she was alive, why did you call a Code Blue? Hmm? Were you trying to play a trick on us? Cause if you wereâ€|"

"No!" the nurse exclaimed defensively, "no, I wasn't! I would never do something like that! The terminal at my station had reported that Ms. Tachikawa's heart had stopped, so I called a code blue, but when I got in here, I found that a wire had disconnected. I didn't want to take any chances that she might have really been under cardiac arrest, so I called an alert."

The Doctor thought that over for a second. " Well, you *\*did\** do the right thing, so you will not get sacked, but we've got another problem, did Natalie deliver the papers to you?"

" Yes," replied the nurse, " but she disappeared after that. I haven't seen her since."

Doctor Foster wasn't surprised at that, so she continued. "Well, then I presume you know that Fraâ€|"

She was interrupted by the nurse who shushed her before saying. " Don't mention that to her. I do know what the papers said. So, let's

just continue from there. All right."

The Doctor nodded, understanding what the nurse was saying. "Well," she continued, "that's not the biggest problem. The entire hospital is in an uproar! People are panicking, trying to find out what happened to her. We've got to tell them something, and we just can't say that it was a loose wire, or a mistake. What would our superiors think of that?"

"They'll think that we were insane," the nurse replied plainly.

"Exactly," answered Foster. "We can't tell them that, so what can we tell them?" They mulled over it until Mimi, who thus far had gone unnoticed, spoke up.

"Well," she croaked weakly, "you can tell them that I died. That would benefit us both."

The Doctor turned to face her. "Explain how that is beneficial, Ms. Tachikawa," said the doctor with a glint in her eyes.

\_\_Hmm, Mimi thought, \_\_that expression looks familiar. I wonder where I've seen it before\_\_

\_\_

Her thoughts were broken, when the Doctor pried, "Ms. Tachikawa!" she exclaimed, sharply jolting Mimi back to reality.

"Uh\_\_yes," she stuttered. "Um, it would help us both, if you say that I died, because, I do know what happened to me, I mean, my mind knows the facts, but my heart chooses not to believe them completely. But, anyway, I know that if Frank knows that I am indeed alive, according to what you're saying, he might come after me, to do what, I don't know, maybe to kill me, maybe to apologize, I don't know. I'm guessing I shouldn't take any chances. If you say that, it will give me time to escape, and, even if he did find out that I was alive, I would be long gone." She finished, breathless. \_\_Wow, she thought, \_\_I'm beginning to act and sound like Izzy! Next thing I know, I'll be saying "Prodigious!" She allowed herself a quick laugh, but the doctor again broke her thoughts.\_\_

\_\_

"Do you have any idea what we'll say about your 'death'? I mean, we do have to write a report. What will we say?"

The nurse spoke up, "Well, I think I know what she's thinking. We can use the code blue to our advantage. We can say that she went into cardiac arrest, we gave her CPR and that was useless. We can say that she died at 3:40 AM. I guess that our superiors will go along with that as long as we explain to them what we are doing. You know they'd probably help her out. After all, she did keep this hospital from closing down by donating the money we needed to keep it open when no one else would." She eyed the group. "They'd probably be glad to help. I vote that we go through with Mimi's plan. All in favor, say 'Aye'. I say aye."

There was a moment of silence, before another Doctor spoke up. He

said, " I think we should go along with it. I say Aye."

The others in the group cast glances among themselves, unsure of what to say.

"Well," Mimi began, " I really think that's the best way to go, so aye."

The other four people stood in silence, trying to make a decision. Weighing the consequences, looking at the short term effects and such took up a long time.

If they declared Mimi Tachikawa dead, yes it might help them all, and their superiors would probably go along with it, but then, some meddling reported or someone like that who would still think that Mimi is alive might stumble on to the plan and figure it out. Also, since she was famous, the country might be in an uproar, and if they ever found out that the hospital staff was lying, thenâ€|wellâ€| they tried not to think about that. If the public ever found out that she was still alive, that might put her in even greater danger than ever. Frank might pursue her to the ends of the earth then, maybe even attack the hospital staff to find out if they knew where she went. If he thought that she was dead, she might at least have some refuge. Also, if the public found out that the hospital staff lied, then the hospital's reputation might be permanently damaged, and they could all be thrown out of the medical profession. They couldn't decide if it was logical to put the entire hospital staff at risk, \_just to save one person. Truthfully, it wasn't logical, not at all.\_

—

Everyone in the room stood in silence, not sure if it was worth it, but unexpectedly breaking the silence, there was a chorus of three ayes coming from the three other people in the room. Doctor Foster was the only one who hadn't made a decision yet.

"Well, Doctor," the nurse pried, "whaddya say? Are we going to help her or not. If we are going to do this, we will need your support as well. Either that, or you will be sworn to secrecy. What will it be?"

She faced them, deep in thought. She couldn't decide, when suddenly, a voice whispered to her. \_Say ayeâ€|\_

—

She was puzzled as to where the voice came from, but she dismissed it as a hallucination brought on by exhaustion, but she didn't dismiss the message.

Finally, she spoke. "Well," she said, " after a long and intense deliberation, I have decided to say, 'Aye'."

There was a short chorus of cheers from everyone in the room, but Doctor Foster brought them back to their senses.

" If we're going to go through with this crazy stunt, let's get started before I can come to my senses. The plan will be named, Code Blue, all right? We'll start by notifying the public Mimi Tachikawa

has indeed died of cardiac arrest. Then, we'll write the report. After that, since they will least suspect me, she will leave as a long-time friend of mine who came in to get an x-ray. We'll bandage her right leg and take her out in a wheel chair. Then, since I, my friend, and Ms. Tachikawa just so happen to live in the same building, she can pack quickly while I book an online ticket to let's say "Florida?" She looked to Mimi who nodded that that was okay. Doctor Foster continued. " We'll send her on her way, and I'll tell her to move in with my half-cousin who lives in Orlando. All right? Then, if anything goes wrong, she can always book a ticket to somewhere else and move there. I'm sure you have relatives or close friends somewhere, right Ms. Tachikawa?"

"Yes," Mimi replied, "I do, I have family and friends in Japan. Also, please, call me Mimi."

"All right, Mimi. Now, let Operation Code Blue begin!" she finished enthusiastically. Come on let's go! And remember, Mimi, has died, we're supposed to be depressed. If you can't keep a straight face when you're lying, disconnect Mimi from the equipment, and hide her somewhere. Then when you're done, write up the report. All right?"

"Yeah," said the nurse, " I'll do just that. Someone has to do it after all. Right?"

Foster nodded at her, just before she and the other people who had been with her, ran out the door. Now the nurse and Mimi were left alone again, and all was quiet. So she spoke again.

" Hey Mimi? Mind if I ask you a question?"

"No," Mimi replied, " go ahead."

"Well, why did you agree to go along with this plan, let alone create it?"

Mimi was silent. The only reason she had come up with this plan was because they had once considered using it during their adventures in Digiworld, to hide from the Dark Masters. She didn't know if she should tell the nurse that, so she pulled another reason from her past.

" Well, it's something that happened a long time ago, when I was about 13 or so. Someone once said that they would care less if I died. I don't know if he meant it, or if he was just joking. With him, you never could tell. So, I decided to make his wish come true. I'm going to die."

" That was a horrible thing to say. How could someone say that to you? Who said it? Why if I ever get my hands on him?" she said angrily.

Mimi gave her a small smile, it was nice to finally tell someone who sympathized, I mean, sincerely sympathized. Not just "Oh, he shouldn't have said that," or "Oh, I'm sorry." It seemed like she really understood what was going on inside her.

"Well, Mimi answered, "the reason he said it is simple enough, I loved him, and he didn't love me, so he started acting like a



complete jerk towards me, to make me hate him, I guess, but still like I said before, I don't know if he was joking, just trying to make me mad at him, or if he really meant it, I don't know. Anyway, you wouldn't know him, he was a childhood friend of mine who lives in Japan. Well, I still think he does." She trailed off, lost in thought.

The nurse interpreted her silence as painful memories coming to the fore, and she interpreted right, so she let her be. As the nurse continued disconnecting the equipment, she wished she could be out front with Doctor Foster to see what was going on.

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The minute Doctor Foster stepped out into the main lobby, she wished she could run back the way she came, but she couldn't. She had to go through with Code Blue, for Mimi's sake.

There were at least fifty reporters sitting on the sofa-like chairs of the lobby, and at first, no one seemed to notice her and the people with her, but that was too good to be true.

About half a minute after she entered the room, a woman in her early twenties with short brown hair and a man with a video camera, came running over to meet her.

The reporter woman pushed a microphone in her face and said, " Hi, my name is Sarah Rhodes, are you by any chance Doctor Foster, Ms. Tachikawa's doctor?"

The man with the video camera moved over to the side and kept hovering around the small gathering. More and more of the reporters and their cameramen walked over to where she was and eagerly tried to get her to speak to them.

"Um, yes," she answered nervously. " Yes I am."

"Great!" exclaimed Ms. Rhodes excitedly. " Now, would you mind answering a few questions for us?" She asked gesturing to the enormous crowd surrounding them.

" Of course," Foster replied simply, " What would you like to know?"

"Well," began Ms. Rhodes, " we received a report, that at 3:30 AM, Mimi Tachikawa went into cardiac arrest. Is that true?"

"Yes," Foster lied.

" Would you mind telling us her current status?" Rhodes pried. She tried to swallow the developing lump in her throat as she asked the question. She wasn't sure if she wanted to ask it, but she had to. She braced herself for the worst.

Rhodes paled when Foster's expression turned grim, and she shook her head.

She lowered her head and continued shaking it as she replied. " I'm sorry," she said softly, her voice belying that she was on the edge of tears. She raised her head and stared at the reporters. " Ms.

Tachikawa passed away at 3:40 A.M. the cause of death, heart failure. I'm sorry, but no more questions."

She and her group turned away and headed back towards the ICU ward, not even stopping to look back at the group of reporters who were shocked stiff. Doctor Foster and her assistants pretended to choke back tears, until they were out of sight, after having gotten into the elevator.

"Excellent performance," one of the other doctors whispered.

"Yes," Foster answered equally softly. "I just wish that I didn't have to do it."

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The nurse had disconnected Mimi from the machines, but hadn't hidden her, she simply took her back to the station to write up the fake death report. Mimi stood and looked over the nurse's shoulder as she did the paperwork. Suddenly, her gaze lighted on some folded papers on a desk next to her. Curious, she picked them up, unfolded them and read them. "What's this?" she muttered as she opened them.

"What's what?" the nurse replied, turning away from her paperwork. She paled ten shades when she saw what Mimi was talking about. In Mimi's hands was the notice that her fianc e was out on bail.

Mimi also paled, but she paled twenty shades instead. As she clutched the notice in her shaking hands, she asked, on the verge of hysterics, "Is this true? Tell me, it's not true? He didn't hurt me did he? This is some kind of trick right? Just like Code Blue? Right, you just want to make me think he hurt me right? Tell me this is a lie!"

"Mimi, you said it yourself," replied the nurse, "you said that you know he hurt you. You said it yourself, but yes, that message is true. Please be careful of him. From what he did to you, I see that he's a very dangerous man. Please be careful."

"But he didn't do anything," Mimi protested quietly. "He'd never hurt me. He loves me. I know he does. Really he does."

The nurse sighed to herself. There was no use arguing with her. Oh well, she'd figure out the truth on her own time.

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\*\* Approximately one week after Code Blue started. Mimi is preparing to leave the hospital  \*\*

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"Tell me what your name is," Doctor Foster asked Mimi.

"My name is Lin Hishika."

"Where did you live previously?"

"Japan."

" Where does your cousin live?"

"Orlando, Florida."

" What was your previous occupation?"

"A waitress."

" Good. You seem to know it well. I think you'll pass as anyone but Mimi Tachikawa. How's your hair look? Do you like it?"

Mimi walked over to a mirror on the wall opposite her and stared at her reflection. Her face was still the same, but she had cut her hair off from her shoulders down. Also, she had dark brown streaks dyed into it. When she first saw her new persona, she almost didn't recognize herself, but right now, she had it up in a more familiar style from her childhood. She had most of it tied up in a short ponytail, except for two long strands which framed her face.

She scrutinized herself for a minute before saying, " It'll do."

"Well," said Foster, " I know that the clothes aren't exactly what you're used to, but they should be okay, right?"

Mimi scrutinized the baby blue shirt and pleated black skirt that she was wearing. " Yeah, they'll do."

" All right, are you ready to go?"

"Yes."

" Well come on then," she said gesturing to a wheel chair in front of her, " you sprained your knee, remember?"

" Yeah," said Mimi as she placed a large hat on top of her head and tilted it so that it covered her face.

With the doctor's help, she got over to the chair, but she had to hobble because of the knee brace that Foster had her wear.

"Come on now, let's go." Foster said cheerfully as she wheeled Mimi out of the room.

\*\*\*

\*\*Outsideâ€|\*\*

\*\*

\*\* The sun was brighter than she ever remembered it being before, it was high in the sky, shining down its warmth and light upon the world. Nonetheless, Mimi shivered. She couldn't help thinking what would happen now. She was out of the safety of the hospital, away from the friends she had made over the past week. She would miss them all.\*\*

\*\*

"Up you go," Foster said as she rolled Mimi's chair up the ramp to

get into the parking lot.

"Where are we going?" Mimi asked.

"I'm taking you in my car, because it's more familiar around the neighborhood, people won't question it. And we'll ditch the wheelchair in the garage, near my car. Okay?"

" Sure," Mimi replied as she drifted off into a daydream.

\*\*\*

\*\*Approximately 20 minutes later, at the apartment buildingâ€|\*\*

\*\*

Doctor Foster sighed as she stepped out of her car, a blue Escort that had seen more than its share of accidents. The back bumper was dented, and wasn't attached to the frame of the car in places. The car almost stalled 4 times on the journey here, and whenever you had to stop at a traffic light, when you hit the brakes, the car shuddered violently as it all but skidded to a stop. It was a horrible ride from Mimi's point of view; she had no idea how Doctor Foster could stay so perky after all that.

" Well," Foster said, " here we are, the humble Fourth Street Apartments. Your previous abode. You stayed here up till the time you got attacked. This was where you were hiding from Frank Well, since you were just declared dead, all your stuff should still be in there." She gestured to a five story building whose brown, brick form towered over her. In one of the windows on the ground floor, a pair of yellow curtains fluttered in a open window. There was a woman at the kitchen sink, doing the dishes it looked like.

"Hi, Marie!" Doctor Foster greeted her loudly as they walked over to the window to talk to the woman.

"Hi, Teresa," Marie replied. " I see you brought a friend. What's her name?"

" Lin Hishika," Mimi answered happily. " Nice to meet you Marie."

"Same to you, Lin. Here in the Fourth Street Apartment buildings, we're all friends, and we're always glad to make new ones. I'm the landlord here, so remember, if you ever need a favor, just give me a ring and let me know."

Mimi smiled at her. " Thank you, Marie. I'll remember it. Thank you very much."

"You're welcome. Now you better get inside." Marie looked up at the darkening sky. " It's getting late, and when it gets late, bad things happen. All right?"

"Sure," Teresa (Dr. Foster) replied, " we were just heading in right now. Let's get going, Lin."

"All right," Mimi said as she followed Teresa into the building.

\*\*\*

"Your apartment is on the third floor. When you get to the third floor, you turn left. Your apartment is the one at the end of that corridor. Mine is at the opposite end. All right, got it?"

Mimi stared at the ancient wooden stairs and replied, " Yeah. I get it."

"Now," Teresa said, " you're not going to have much time. I've heard that a man matching Frank's description is on his way here, so grab whatever you can and run. It will take me five minutes to book the ticket. When I'm done, I'll knock once all right? Once I get there, you'll take whatever you have and you'll get outta here. I'll stay here." She handed Mimi two sets of keys. " The one with no key ring and only one key on it, is your apartment key and the one with two keys with the Statue of Liberty key chain, are the spare keys to my car. You'll take that, understood?"

Mimi looked perplexed. " But what are you going to use?"

"Oh, don't worry about me. I was planning to buy a new one anyway. All right?"

Mimi nodded.

"Now, let's get going. We don't have much time."

Teresa hauled Mimi up the creaky stairs to the third floor before they parted ways, Teresa running to the right corridor and Mimi running to the left.

\*\*\*

\*\*In Mimi's apartmentâ€|\*\*

\*\*

Stepping into the apartment from the corridor, was like stepping into another world. The corridors were painted with dark, peeling brown paint, and smelled absolutely horrible, whereas, Mimi's apartment was painted blue, had plush white carpet, and smelled okay. But she neglected to notice the large blood stain on the wall.

Forgetting Teresa's warning of time running out, Mimi walked over to the window and looked out. Her window overlooked a narrow alleyway; she could see Teresa's car from here. She leaned on the window frame, letting the dimming sunlight wash over her body. She missed seeing the sunset, but now was not the time.

She walked over to her bed, knelt by it, and pulled a large black duffel bag out from under it. She opened to zip and tossed the bag onto her bed before jumping over to her closet, grabbing armfuls of clothes and stuffing them into her bag. Since she had only a minimal amount of clothes in her closet ( since when she had run before, she only managed to grab a few clothes), it took her less than a minute to get them all into the bag. Next, she ran into the small bathroom,

opened a cupboard under the sink and pulled out two smaller bags which contained various things such as toothpaste, a toothbrush, make up and such. She dumped those into the duffel bag too. Next, she turned to her vanity in the bed room. She towed the duffel bag over, and with one sweep of her hand, she sent everything on the counter falling into the bag. Next, she opened a drawer and grabbed everything out of that and stuffed that into the bag. After that, she ran into the tiny kitchen area, pulled her purse out of the kitchen cabinet. She opened the silverware drawer and lifted the cheap plastic tray that had been left in there by the previous occupants. Under it, was a plain white envelope.

\_Good ,she thought no one had found her secret stash of money. She tucked that into her purse before returning to the bedroom. Last but not least, she opened the drawer on the nightstand next to her bed and pulled out a small wooden box. She took a moment to open it and gaze at the contents inside. \_

—

This was her other secret stash. In this box was her jewelry. She could always pawn it if she needed money, but there were some items she couldn't bear to part with for all the money in the world. From under all the other items crammed into the small box, she pulled out her crest and Digivice. She would not part with those for all the money in the world. Se stared at them for a moment, memories returning to her, when a single knock at the door startled her.

Remembering what Teresa had told her, she called, " Hold on a sec!" She dropped the crest and digivice back into the box, dropped the box into the bag and pulled the zip shut. Knowing she'd probably have to run out the door. She grabbed the car keys from the counter, but left the apartment key there, hoisted the duffel bag and purse onto one shoulder, and answered the door.

Sure enough, Teresa was standing there holding out a folded piece of paper for her.

" Here," Teresa said, " I booked you under your alias for a 10:00 PM flight to Tampa on an airline named Sunshine Air.

Mimi took the unusually heavy paper from her, and was about to say something, when she was interrupted by the screeching of tires. Teresa ran over to the window, instructing Mimi to stay by the door.

" Oh no!" Teresa practically screamed, " you've gotta get out of here right now! Frank's here!"

\*\*\*

Mimi stood at the door, unable to move. \_ This is crazy she thought, \_ I shouldn't be running from him. He loves me. He really does. I know it. I can just explain to him what happened, and we can work out this misunderstanding. She wanted to believe that, but some part of her nagged her to get help.\_\_

—

"Teresa," said Mimi, "call Marie and ask her to stall him as long as possible. Tell her to do that, but not to put herself in danger. Tell her to stall him as long as it's safe to do so. I really don't know what to believe, but I'll trust that you're telling the truth. Call for help, and I'll run."

"All right," said Teresa, "I'll do that." She ran over to the phone and pressed the star. Marie said that a man was approaching the building, and Teresa gave her Mimi's message. Marie agreed and said that she would be careful.

After Teresa hung up the phone, she turned back to Mimi.

"Now, Lin," she said addressing Mimi, "here's what you're going to do. I left my apartment door open. You've gotta climb out of the window and down the fire escape to my car. Then you're going to head out to the interstate, back towards the hospital, but you'll go through the exit after that. That'll take you to the airport. Now hurry! You don't have much time! Go!"

Mimi, bags, keys, and ticket in hand, turned to run down the hall, but then a thought struck her. "What about you?" she asked.

"Don't worry about me. I'm going to stay behind and distract him. Now go!"

"But how?" she began, but she was interrupted by Teresa who simply said.

"Trust me." She gave Mimi a small smile, then showed her a small magenta object which caused Mimi to smile.

"I trust you," Celeste. Thank you for everything." She smiled again, then turned and ran down the hall, disappearing into shadows of the hallway.

Teresa watched Mimi disappear into her apartment before taking the device she held in her hand, waving it over her head and being enveloped in a pocket of white light. When the light faded, it revealed a woman with long blond hair, blue eyes and angel wings.

\*\*\*

When Marie had received Teresa's call, she had been pretty sure what she was going to say, so she was ready. When she saw the man enter the building she said, "Sir, can I help you?"

He turned to face her, his face red, "Yeah you can help me!" he yelled. "You can tell me where the hell my fiancée is!"

"And who is your fiancée?" Marie asked, her voice full of fake calmness.

The man moved forward and grabbed Marie's collar. "Don't play dumb with me!" he hissed in her face. "Where is Mimi Tachikawa?!"

"I'm sorry," Marie stuttered, "there is no one by that name in this building. Besides, it was already announced that she died of a heart attack about a week ago."

" Liar!" he screamed as he flung her across the room. She landed against her desk, hitting her head on the surface. She slumped to the ground, unconscious.

\*\*\*

Mimi opened the window with a panicked push and dispatched the screening in the same way. It was dark, and she couldn't see where the landing was, so she didn't want to throw and lose anything. She couldn't afford to, but she couldn't afford to lose time either.

\_Come on! She thought. \_ Think Think! \_What can I use? Is there a flashlight anywhere?\_\_\_

—

She reached over to the nearby desk to turn on a lamp, but through the locked, bolted and chained apartment door, she heard footsteps stomping up the stairs, angry ones. She knew who it was, so she didn't turn on the light.

\_ Think! Think! She urged herself. That's when she remembered. \_ The papers! They seemed unusually heavy at the time.\_\_\_

—

She grabbed the papers off the nearby desk and unfolded them. Sure enough, inside was a flash card.\_ Thank you Celeste, she thought as she stuffed the papers into her purse.\_

—

In the center of the card, she could make out a large red area that said press. She clamped the card between her teeth, pressing down extremely hard on that one spot. Sure enough, a small bulb at the end of the plastic covered card, lit up, dimly illuminating the landing. \_Great! She thought as she gently, but quickly placed her duffel bag on the landing, then she placed her purse on top of the bag before jumping silently onto the landing.\_\_\_

—

\*\*\*

Celeste stood and waited patiently in the apartment. She knew that he was coming here, but she wasn't worried. She knew exactly what to do. This was the only thing she could do to help Mimi right now. She had to hope that Mimi would get out safely on her own. She grew tired of standing, so she sat on the bed and examined the room. Yes, she could feel everything that went on in the room. She could feel the short-lived feeling of safety that Mimi had felt when she first moved in, she felt the surprise and fear that Mimi had felt when Frank had appeared unexpectedly. She could feel the mental and emotional anguish she had felt as he had berated her. She could feel the physical pain that had come with each blow, and the despair that Mimi had felt. Lastly, she felt the comforting, but frightening darkness of the coma.



Her thoughts were interrupted when the apartment door burst open so hard, that when it slammed into the wall, it broke through the wood.

She took it in stride as she stood and glared defiantly at the man who was responsible for everything, Frank Wirani.

He stalked up angrily to Celeste and with one hand, grabbed her by the collar of her dress. "Where is she?!" he snarled angrily. " I know she's here! Where did she go?!" he demanded angrily.

"Where is who?" Celeste asked coolly as she looked down at the massive hand at her neck.

"Ah! Idiot!" he screamed as he tried to backhand her with his free hand, but to no avail. She simply grabbed his free hand with hers to stop the blow, which she did. Then, she grabbed the hand around her collar, and with amazing strength pulled it off, ripping the fabric of her dress in the process, but that didn't matter. When she had done that, she grabbed his arm, and once again, with inhuman strength, flung him into the wall.

He hit it so hard that it again cracked the wood. He sat there for a couple minutes, dazed. He was amazed at what strength this little sprite had. He tried to move, but in the process, discovered that one of his shoulders had probably been popped out of its socket.

Nonetheless, he tried to get up again, but Celeste replied, " I don't think so." With that, she threw a disk Frisbee-style at him. It glowed, then latched around his waist and expanded, wrapping him in a golden cocoon before turning into a metal chain that restrained every part of his body.

"Well," she said, " Now that that's taken care of, all I have to do is wait." She sat down on the bed, aware that Frank was chained and sitting against the wall, but she sat and stared at the silvery moonlight now mixed with the dim, yellow glow of a dying streetlight, the mixture washing over her body, casting it with a pale golden glow.

\*\*\*

Having made her way safely down the landing, Mimi now ran through the alleyway to Teresa's car, a cool breeze nipping at her skin. Oh how she wished she could stop and enjoy the cool, fresh breeze, but she didn't know if Frank was still on her trail, so there was no time to stop now. She continued running.

\*\*\*

Once she had safely made her way through the alley and was now in the parking lot where Teresa's car was parked, she took the keys and unlocked the doors. She threw her duffel bag onto the passenger seat, her purse as well, before climbing in, locking the door, and inserting the key into the ignition. She turned it, but the only reaction from the engine was a splutter telling her that it wasn't going to start.

\_ No! she thought, \_come on! You've gotta start! Please start! I 've

gotta get out of here! Come on! Come on! She tried it again, but the reaction was the same. She tried it three more times, but to no avail. Any moment, she expected to see Frank burst out of the lobby and stalk up to her car, angrily demanding that she get out. \_God help me if he does, she thought as she continued trying to start the car.\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*

When Celeste heard the car engine splutter, she knew that it was time to go, but she knew that if she left, the chains that bound Frank, would dissolve, leaving him free to pursue Mimi. She didn't want to go, but she knew that she had to, or else Mimi would never get out of here. She cast a glance back at Frank who was still struggling against the chains.

"I'll get you for this!" he screamed at her.

Her only response before vanishing was, " You have no heart." With that, she dissolved into light and soared out the apartment window. At the same moment, the chains binding Frank dissolved and he pulled himself to his feet, before dashing down the stairs as fast as he could.

\*\*\*

From the car, Mimi could hear him scream " I'll get you for this!" Her heart clenched with fear as she frantically tried to get the car started. \_ He's coming! She turned the key again, but the result was the same. She was just about to give up, when she saw a bright light soar out of her apartment window and disappear into the sky. That's when she saw it. A single white feather had fallen from the light and was now drifting on the air currents down towards the ground. It was going to land on top of the car's hood. She watched as it drifted towards the hood and finally, landing on it. With that, the car roared to life. Mimi wasted no time in putting the car into reverse, and speeding out of the parking lot. Once she was on the road, she sped in the direction of the hospital.\_

—

\*\*\*

\*\*Approximately 25 minutes laterâ€|\*\*

\*\*

\*\* Mimi was now on the highway heading towards the airport. She was alone on the road, and that sort of unnerved her, but at the same time, as she could see, Frank was not following her. She was glad, but still unsettled. She decided to put on the radio. She turned the dial to her favorite station. She caught the end of the announcements and they began to play a song. When she heard the words, she was stunned at how closely, they applied to her, but still how different the situation was. Here's what she heard.\*\*

\*\*

And she takes another step  
Slowly she opens the door  
Check that he is sleeping  
Pick up all the broken glass and furniture on the floor  
Been up half the night screaming, now it's time to get away  
Pack up the kids in the car  
Another bruise to try and hide  
Another alibi to write  
Another ditch in the road  
You keep moving  
Another stop sign  
You keep moving on  
And the years go by so fast  
Wonder how I ever made it through.  
And there's children to think of  
Baby's asleep in the backseat  
Wonder how they'll ever make it through this living nightmare  
But the mind is an amazing thing  
Full of candy dreams and new toys and another cheap hotel  
Two beds and a coffee machine  
But there are groceries to buy and she knows she'll have to go  
home  
Another ditch in the road  
You keep moving  
Another stop sign  
You keep moving on  
And the years go by so fast  
Wonder how I made it through  
Another bruise to try and hide  
Another alibi to write  
Another lonely highway in the black of night

But there's hope in the darkness  
You know you're going to make it  
Another ditch in the road  
Keep moving  
Another stop sign  
You keep moving on  
And the years go by so fast  
A silent fortress built to last  
Wonder how I ever made it .

By the time the song was over, Mimi realized that she had tears in her eyes, but she wiped them away with the back of her hand. She wished she didn't know how horrible that kind of experience is, but here she was, experiencing something close to it. \_Well she thought wryly, \_ If he wants groceries, he's gonna have to buy them himself cause I ain't going back. \_

—

Resolute, she continued driving.

\*\*\*

\*\*45 minutes later at the airportâ€|\*\*

\*\*

Mimi sat back in one of the chairs at the airport terminal where she was supposed to catch her flight. She looked out at the stars and the airplane that would be her ticket to freedom. She had already collected her ticket and such. She was ready to leave. She sipped a warm cup of tea that she had bought from a nearby cafÃ©, as she looked outside.

She was so wrapped up in her thoughts, that she didn't notice that someone was speaking to her.

" Excuse me, Miss, but is this seat taken?" a young man asked as he gestured to the seat next to her.

She took a quick look around at the terminal. There were plenty of other empty seats around. Why didn't he just take one of them?

"No," she answered with a smile. " Go ahead, have a seat."

"Thank you," he answered returning the smile. For a while, they sat in silence, Mimi staring outside, occasionally sipping her tea, and the young man busy reading a business magazine. Mimi felt a bit awkward, but she asked, " Um, would you mind if I asked why you didn't take one of the other empty seats?" she asked gesturing to the rows of empty seats.

He put down his magazine. " No, not at all. Well, you see, you looked like you needed a friend, and I was never one to let a person in need of a friend go without one."

Those words caused Mimi to go into a mental daze. When she was younger, someone had said those exact same words to her. Under her breath, she whispered, "Reliability?"

The young man looked shocked at that. "How do you know that?" he whispered back.

"Joe!" Mimi whispered excitedly, " no wonder I thought I recognized that saying. And it's no wonder you don't recognize me! It's me, Mimi, but I'm under the assumed name Lin. It's so nice to see you again Joe!"

Joe paled. " Mimi!" he whispered back. " It's you! I can't believe it! It's really you! I heard that you died a week ago! I can't believe it!" She gave him a quick hug to calm him down.

" That was part of a plan called Code Blue that was designed to help me get out of state safely."

"What're you running from?" he asked.

" Not what, who. My fianc e tried to kill me, well at least that's what everyone says. I don't know whether or not to believe it. I'm sure you heard about it, it happened over four months ago."

Joe shook his head. " No, I'm afraid I didn't, I wasn't in the country at that time. I just flew in from Japan a week ago for a business trip. That's when I'd heard about the death. I remember when I stepped out of the terminal, it was everywhere, people were talking about it, it was on the front page of every newspaper, it was literally everywhere. People really care about you Mimi, so don't you ever go and die now. You hear me?"

"Yeah," she giggled.

"Good. Oh, I forgot to ask. Who is your fianc e? It's notâ€|.?"

"No, it's someone that was at the party though, one of the band members."

"Oh." Joe looked up. " Well," he said. " It looks like we're boarding early."

Mimi set her Styrofoam cup on a nearby table, grabbed her purse and her ticket before standing up. " Would you mind accompanying me?" she asked.

"Not at all." He answered. "Where are you sitting?"

She looked at her ticket. " Seat 36 A. You?"

Joe stared at his ticket, a look of incredulity on his face.

"What is it?" she asked.

" I'm sitting in seat 36 B."

The stared at each other, overcome by shock, before bursting into peals of laughter.

"What are the odds of that happening?" she asked, but when he started spouting out numbers like Izzy, she stopped him.

"Well, anyway, we'll discuss that on the plane. Let's get going, and remember, I'm now Lin Hishika, not Mimi."

"All right, Lin." He said as they walked up to the gate. There were three people in front of them, and one was apparently having trouble finding his ticket. He kept digging through his coat pocket searching for it.

Mimi looked around nervously, she couldn't help but have the feeling that he was in the terminal, staring directly at her. Even with Joe to protect her, she still didn't feel safe. Everyone else had their tickets in hand, ready to board, but the man in front still hadn't found his tickets. Murmurs rippled through the line.

Mimi kept looking around, and Joe noticed this, but was too preoccupied with impatience. They stood in line for five minutes, waiting for the guy to find his ticket. The people in the line grew more impatient, and Mimi grew more nervous. She still couldn't shake the feeling that she was being watched. She looked around again, and suddenly, her worst fears were confirmed. She spotted him standing across the hall from the gate. He was searching the crowd, it seemed that he hadn't spotted her yet, but that was too good to be true. It seemed that even having changed her looks, he still recognized her. Once he spotted her, his eyes locked onto her and he began to stalk across the terminal towards her.

She noticed this, and tapped Joe on the shoulder and hissed, "He's here and he's spotted me!"

"Who?" Joe asked.

Mimi resisted the urge to slap him and hissed, " My fiancÃ©!"

They cast nervous glances before Joe grabbed her ticket And her arm and pulled her to the front of the line.

"Come on," Joe said to the attendant. " Please take these now and let us on board. It's an emergency!"

The attendant hesitated for a second before taking the tickets ripping off the boarding passes and handing the rest back to Joe. " Thanks a million," Joe said and he pulled Mimi into the gate.

Mimi had just passed through the gate when the man at the front of the line grabbed her around the waist and yanked her from Joe's grasp. Mimi let out a piercing scream and struggled to free herself from the stranger's grasp, but to no avail. She kept struggling. The people noticed, but some were too scared to react. Luckily, the second man in line wasn't one of them. He took a heavy book that he had been holding and struck the stranger who held Mimi on the back of the neck. Mimi felt his grasp grow limp and she squirmed free. She

still had her purse, and she was grateful. The man who had undoubtedly saved her, threw the boarding pass in front of the shocked attendant who acknowledged it with a nod. The hero then grabbed hold of her arm and joined Joe at the terminal. They then headed towards the plane.

"Who are you?" Mimi asked.

"Don't you recognize me, Mimi?" the man asked.

Mimi shook her head. "Is it that obvious who I am?"

"Yeah, but it's not the same in my case. Knowledge."

"Izzy?"

The man shook his head in response. "It is me. Now, where are you sitting?"

"36 A."

"I'm sitting in 36 B," Joe said.

"That's curious, I'm sitting in 36 C." Izzy said.

They all shrugged it off as coincidence, and entered the plane.

\*\*\*

A couple minutes later, Mimi was seated in her window seat with Izzy and Joe beside her. She was grateful that she had met up with her friends, they saved her life probably. She gazed out the window, not sorry that she would probably be seeing the last of this place for a long time to come. She smiled to herself as she thought of the sweet taste of freedom. She felt the plane begin to move, readying itself for take off. She tried to forget about what happened in the terminal, but the passengers were abuzz about it. Luckily, no one noticed her, or asked any questions. As the plane backed away from the terminal, she got one last look at it. With that last look, her contentedness vanished. The last thing she saw, was Frank pressed up against the glass, trying to scream at her. When he got frustrated, he punched the glass, cracking it slightly. She turned her head away and didn't look back again until the plane was flying high above the clouds. She looked back and saw the multicolored lights of the city. She turned back and looked at her friends who were already asleep. She pulled out a pillow from behind her back, put it behind her head and laid her head on it. She pulled a standard airline blanket up to her shoulders, turned out the light, closed the window shade and fell into a fitful sleep.

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— \*\* \_\_\_\_ \*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\*\_





from his P.O.V. except for like a few tiny parts that have to do with Mimi all right? Also, in this part, Matt's in Florida. K? Oh, BTW, this story begins about a day or so after Mimi left the hospital. If you have no idea what I'm talking about, I suggest you read part one. Also, the Soldier of Sincerity and the Knight of Fiendship are partly from Sailor Moon, but I still created the idea . K? The time frame is sorta messed up I think, but bear with it. Please. Be forewarned, this gets a bit scary in parts!Well onto the story!\*\*

\* \*

[illegible]

\* \*

## # Part Two: Reunion

[illegible]

\* \*

Yamato Ishida stormed out of the tall, sky-scraping apartment building, pulling the wooden door closed with a violent slam. He stormed across the street, not aware that cars were still speeding wildly down the street, because he was inwardly cursing himself for being such a fool. Through the intervention of some unknown grace, he managed to reach his car without getting run over. When he got there, he pulled the door open so hard, that it almost came off of its hinges. He climbed in still fuming, in the process catching one last glimpse of the woman that had almost become his fiancée.

She was standing at her window, smirking directly at him. He knew that she must be thinking. \_What an idiot he is. How could he ever have believed that I could have possibly ever have loved him! Ha! I am far too good for him! She gave him one last indignant toss of her head, as though to confirm his thoughts.\_

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He didn't take another look back as he sped down the street. He really couldn't concentrate on his driving, since his mind was clouded with anger. He slowed the car to a stop at a traffic light. As he waited, his mind couldn't help but wander back to the events of the previous hour.

\* \* \*

## ## Flashbackâ€¦

Matt stepped out from the small, cramped elevator into the seemingly endless corridor, an air of confidence enveloping him. He knew exactly what he was doing, where he was going, and what he would say. He was confident that things would go fine. He internally reassured himself, and he was partly successful. Outwardly, he showed no sign of fear and nervousness, but on the inside, he was shaking. This was probably the hardest thing for him to do. He felt even more scared

than the time that they had faced Apocalymon. Then at least, he had all his friends to support him then, but here, it was just him up against his greatest fear, expressing his true feelings to someone. You know what I mean, letting someone get close to you. He was taking a risk, but nonetheless he felt confident.

After stepping out of the elevator and persuading himself to continue, he walked all the way down to the end of the hallway and paused in front of the door that was numbered 436.

\_Well, he thought, \_here I am. I guess it's now or never. It's going to be easy. All I've gotta do, is go in there, and ask her, plain and simple, no sugar coating. I'll just go up to her and ask her if she'll marry me. That's all I've gotta do. Now, come on, you've gotta do this. You love her and she loves you, right? \_

—

He paused for a second. Now he was worried. The night before, he hardly got any sleep because of the worry that she, the one he loved, would decline and maybe leave his heart crushed. He was still going to go through with his plan though. From his pocket, he pulled out a small velvet covered box and concealed it in his hand. Taking a deep breath to try and calm the butterflies in his stomach, he knocked on the door of the apartment. He expected to get an answer after about a minute, but when he didn't, he began to get worried. He tried to listen through the door, but he heard only silence. Maybe, she'd hurt herself or maybe she was missing or something along those lines. His heart began to pound wildly for the fear that maybe something horrible had happened to the one he loved.

Not sure what to do, he reached out with a shaking hand and tested the door knob. To his extreme surprise, the doorknob turned in his hand. It was a very rare event when she left the door unlocked. Usually, she only left it open if she was expecting him. Even when she just went down the hall, she didn't leave the door unlocked. Now he was worried. She wasn't expecting him, so why would the door be open?

Slowly and hesitantly, he turned the knob and opened the door with one hard push. When he saw what was inside the room, his heart shattered into a million pieces and then some. He felt the sadness, hurt and anger well up inside of him, threatening to corrode his spirit and destroy his soul.

What greeted him in the apartment were two startled pairs of eyes, one set belonging to his girlfriend and the other belonging to a strange man. At first, he thought that he might be a relative of hers, but he immediately dismissed that possibility. He cleared all the haze from his mind and just took in the whole truth. They were making out in the middle of the apartment floor.

Almost immediately, the woman got up and stood to face him.

She brushed a strand of her strawberry blond hair out of her emerald green eyes that were now tinged with anger.

"Matt!" she screamed angrily wiping her mouth, " how dare you barge into my apartment?! You have no right!"

" What do you mean I have no right, Lisa?!" he retorted angrily as he brushed his own golden hair out of angry azure eyes. " I should have a right! I loved you and I thought you loved me!" He held up the velvet box that he had in his hand. " You know what I came here to do?!" he yelled. "I came here to propose to you!" he yelled as he waved the velvet box in the air. " I thought you loved me! It seems I was wrong!" He turned to walk out the door.

" Mattâ€|Matt w..wait!" she stuttered. "It's not what you think!" She lunged forward and grabbed onto his arm.

He whirled to face her. " What kind of fool do you take me for?!" he snarled in her face. " Let go of me now!" he yelled as he jerked his arm away. He turned to walk away again, but he noticed that she was reaching for his arm again. He whirled around and backhanded her across the face.

Her eyes widened in shock at the slap and her concerned expression immediately turned to anger.

She was silent for a moment but then she said nonchalantly, " Go on," she began softly, her voice slowly inscreasing to a yell, "go, get out! Get out of here! Leave me alone! Get out of here!"

"I will!" he shouted back. He turned to storm out of the door, but before he did, he turned to the unidentified man and said irately, "Go on, take her, she's all yours!"

The man didn't know how to respond, he just stood still, staring at him, in shock. Matt stood there, just waiting for a response from him. Eventually, he managed to nod mutely at him.

With that, he smiled snidely and stormed out of the apartment, closing the door behind him with a violent slam that caused a glass photo frame with a picture of the two of them as a happy couple, to fall off of a nearby table and fall to the floor, shattering into a million pieces.

\*\*\*

### End Flashbackâ€|

The loud raucous noise of multiple car horns sounding jolted Matt out of his thoughts. Coming out from such a deep level of thought left him a bit dazed. It took him a second to realize where he was. After about a second or so, he realized that he was at a traffic light and that there were quite a few impatient drivers behind him.

Without concious thought his foot came down on the gas pedal putting the car into motion. He knew that the drivers behind him were still fuming, but he paid no attention to them. He was too angry with himself. He cursed himself as his fist made contact with the steering wheel.

His heart ached with grief and sorrow, but also with anger. How could she do that to him?! More importantly, \_why? Had he done something wrong? As far as he knew, he had done everything right. He was always there for her when she needed someone, always all ears and always having a shoulder to cry on. He had never deserted her, or anything along those lines, so \_why?!\_\_

—

Somehow, miraculously, he managed to keep himself from breaking down and he managed to keep his thoughts straight. Still, though, his mind kept wandering back.

He had always thought that he knew how much he truly loved her, but now, he realized truly how much he did. It hurt him deeply to think that she didn't return those feelings. He had loved her with all his heart and then some. He couldn't believe that she'd do something like this to him! He'd always thought she'd loved him, and maybe she truly did. Maybe this was just an accident.

Another red light loomed up ahead and he slowed the car to a stop. Up ahead was an exit to the Florida Turnpike. That was it! That was his ticket to freedom! He'd just get on it and drive. Truthfully, he didn't care where he ended up. He'd just drive until he ran out of gas, then he'd stop, refill and keep on driving. That was what he'd do.

Of course, that's what he'd always done. After the return from DigiWorld, he'd returned to Japan just long enough to complete his school years. Sometime during his college years, he'd decided to take an English class. He remembered that all of the DigiDestined, for some reason, decided to take the same course, but he didn't see any of them in the class. His brother and Kari had also decided to take that class when they got to college. Well, anyway he had passed the class. After that, unsure what to do, he decided to set out for America. His band had split up, so there was really no reason to stay, but he had made enough money to live on it for quite a while ( yes, even in American money, he had enough. I'd say about \$1,000,000,000.), so he set out for America. First, he'd moved to New York, to see if he could find his friend from the band who had moved there. What was his name again? Oh yeah, Frank. Well, he didn't find him, but he did find his first love.

There in New York, he met a woman named Miriam who had captured his heart instantly. Of course, that relationship had failed because they had no common ground, so, he headed to New Jersey where he met someone named Rachel who he fell for. That relationship failed too because she had said that she really didn't care for someone like him. After that, he decided to leave that area and he headed to North Carolina to get away from the city. There, he met someone too, a nice woman named Greta. Of course, that had failed because he found out that she was only interested in his money. After that, he headed to Georgia where he met Erika. Following suit, that relationship failed because she died. She was killed in a freak hit and run accident. He had been distraught over that, but he moved on to Florida. This is where he had met Lisa. For once, things had actually seemed to be working out. It had gone so well that he thought that it might actually work out; it had lasted far longer than his other relationships. He had thought that in order to preserve it, they should get married. Now he scoffed at the idea. Now he was sure that he was destined to ever find love. Every relationship he had had ,had failed and he was sure that it wasn't a coincidence. Supposedly, some higher power was toying with him, taunting and teasing his heart. Well, now, he had been pushed to his limits and he was going to end this little game. He was never going to let anyone, and he meant anyone get hold of his heart ever again. This was coming to and end.

He broke his train of thought and looked up at the light, half expecting it to have changed. To his surprise, it was still green. \_Man! He thought, \_ is this light \*ever\* going to change?\_\_

\_ Why does this kind of thing have to happen to me? He thought, \_  
What did I do to make love turn it's back on me? What!? He thought  
back through everything he could remember and he came up with only  
one incident.\_\_

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\* Disclaimer: As usual, Digimon does not belong to me, it belongs to the people at Toei and Bandai and all of them. You know what I mean. Also, the first set of lyrics are from Savage Garden's "The Lover After Me" they belong to Columbia records, not to me. The second set of lyrics belongs to, well is copyrighted by Nintendo. It is from the Pokemon Movie Album. \*Dodges flying things\* Aah! Hey, well, it fit perfectly, I just felt that either I use that, or I write my own song, and this option seemed the easiest. K? Oh, also, for that PKMN song, I had to improvise a little on the lyrics ( Gomen \*\_\*;;), cause I couldn't really get them. I tried, I searched the Internet, but I couldn't find them, so I had to get them from off the CD cause the little booklet thing didn't have the lyrics. K? Also, the third set of lyrics are from the Celine Dion CD, Let's Talk About Love. It's the song, "Love Is on the Way." That's not mine either. Well, any mention of Celeste and Natalie, belongs to me. The plot idea also belongs to me. Well, that's all for the disclaimer. Onto the Author's

Note! \*\*

\* \*

\*\*Author's Note: Well, as promised, Matt will play a major part in this part! ( But I have to bash him a little.) It's almost completely from his P.O.V. except for like a few tiny parts that have to do with Mimi all right? Also, in this part, Matt's in Florida. K? Oh, BTW, this story begins about a day or so after Mimi left the hospital. If you have no idea what I'm talking about, I suggest you read part one. Also, the Soldier of Sincerity and the Knight of Fiendship are partly from Sailor Moon, but I still created the idea . K? The time frame is sorta messed up I think, but bear with it. Please. Be forewarned, this gets a bit scary in parts!Well onto the story!\*\*

\* \*

[illegible]

\* \*

## # Part Two: Reunion

[illegible]

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###

### Flashbackâ€¦

**\*\* ( 3RD person POV) \*\***

\* \*

" Ice Wolf Claw!" yelled Metal Garurumon as he dispatched another Gizamon.

" Wing Blade!" screeched Garudamon as she used her attack to destroy a group of Bakemon that were going to attack Sora.

"Come on you guys!" Tai yelled. "We've gotta work together! Don't worry about the little ones! Go after Metal Seadramon!"

" Right!" yelled Kari. " Angewomon! You heard him!"

The female angel nodded in return and prepared to unleash her attack.

"Celestial Arrow!" she commanded as she shot an energy arrow towards Metal Seadramon.

The large metallic serpent dispatched the attack with a swipe of his tail, and said mockingly, " Is that the best you can do DigiDestined? Your puny attacks are nothing to me! River of Power!" He released a large blast of energy from his nose and it raced towards Angewomon.

She found herself unable to move as the attack closed in on her.

"Angewomon! Look out!" yelled Angemon as he attempted to push her clear of the attack, but to no avail. Both angels got hit by the blast which caused Angewomon to devolve to Gatomon and Angemon to devolve to Patamon.

"Gatomon!" screamed Kari and she ran over to her fallen companion.

"Patamon!" screamed T.K. as he did the same.

"I'm sorry Kari," said Gatomon weakly.

Kari gave her friend a small smile. "It's okay. We'll get them next time."

"Yeah," T.K. affirmed. "We'll all get them for hurting our friends!"

\*\*\*

Tai watched as T.K. and Kari ran over to their fallen friends and try to reassure them. Kari seemed to be all right though, but now Tai was mad. He glanced over at Matt who understood what Tai's expression said because his own face said the same.

\_ I'll get him for hurting my brother's friend! Thought Matt.\_

\_

\_ And I'll get him for hurting Kari like that! He hurts one of us, he hurts us all! Thought Tai.\_

\_

"WarGreymon!" he yelled.

"Metal Garurumon!" Matt yelled.

"Right," said the two digimon simultaneously.

"Terra Force!" commanded Wargreymon.

"Ice Wolf Claw!" shouted Metal Garurumon.

Both digimon launched their attacks with the hopes that it would be enough to destroy Metal Seadramon, but to no avail. He attacked again, madder then ever.

"River of Power!" he roared.

MegaKabuterimon and Zudomon combined their attacks in the hopes that it would break his attack, but they to were hit and devolved.

Now, the only the two Megas and Garudamon and Lillymon were left.

"You don't stand a chance!" snarled Metal Seadramon. "Gizamon! Take

care of these weaklings!"

A large horde of Gizamon appeared from behind Metal Seadramon and prepared to attack the children.

" I don't think so!" shouted Lillymon. " Flower Cannon!" her hands formed a giant orange blossom which opened to reveal a cannon. She shot a sphere of green energy at the Gizamon and annihilated a large quantity of them, but there were still a lot left.

"I'll help!" said Garudamon. " Wing Blade!" she launched her attack again and destroyed the rest.

"All right!" shouted Mimi and Sora simultaneously before becoming serious again.

Sora and Mimi turned to Matt and Tai.

"You two go after him!" said Sora.

"We'll take care of his little friends!" said Mimi.

" You sure?" asked Tai.

"Yes," said Sora, " Now hurry up!"

"Right!" said Tai.

" Am I too late to play?" asked a familiar menacing voice.

Puppetmon jumped down from the concealment of a nearby tree and turned to face the DigiDestined. The small wooden digimon held his hammer in the air, ready to launch his own attack.

The Digidestined gasped. Now there were two Mega digimon to fight against two stronger Mega digimon. They didn't stand a ghost of a chance.

In his heart, Matt knew the grim truth. They didn't stand a chance unless a miracle occurred. Still though, Gennai's words from before the battle rang in his ears. \_Six will fall and two will be left to stand against some of the strongest of evil. One of the remaining two will also fall inspiring the remaining one to gather their strength and resist 'til the end. But, they must have The Strength of the Fallen! \_

—

Matt knew that this was the battle in which that prophecy would be fulfilled. He had this gut feeling, but the thing that bothered him was, what was The Strength of the Fallen, and just who would be the one that would have to use it?

\_It'll probably be Tai. He's usually the one who comes through when the angels or the rest can't. He probably knows what The Strength of the Fallen is for all I know. \_And the other person must be Sora. She'd inspire him to use whatever powers he had. That meansâ€¦|\_

—



" Matt! Watch out!" he heard Mimi yell.

He snapped out of his thoughts in time to dodge a blast from Metal Seadramon that would have killed him instantaneously. He hit the ground just as the energy raced overhead annihilating a tree behind him.

\_That was close. Too close. I'd better pay better attention.\_

—

He pushed himself to his feet and looked up just in time to see Tai and Sora get strung up by Puppetmon. He looked back to where T.K. and the others and their digimon were and saw that they were in the same predicament that Tai and Sora were in. Everyone, including Augumon, Biyomon, Palmon and Gabumon. Puppetmon had captured everyone except him. Then a thought hit him. Mimi hadn't been captured either. Gennai's words echoed in his mind. \_ Six will fall! \_

—

He gasped from surprise. Did that mean that? Yes, it had to. That's all it could mean! This was \_not good. He had no powers that he knew of, and even if Mimi had powers, she probably wouldn't know how to use them! This was \_really not good.\_

—

"Palmon! No!" Mimi cried. She turned to Puppetmon. "Let them go now! Or else!" she commanded with an unnatural glow in her eyes.

" Or what weakling?" Puppetmon taunted. " What can you do?"

She didn't respond, but she clutched her crest which had begun to glow fiercely.

Picking up on her lead, he replied. "Puppetmon, let our friends go now. I'm warning you."

His crest too began to glow fiercely.

" You do not stand a chance weaklings," said Metal Seadramon as he moved up from the background. " It's just the two of you, no digimon and you do not have your friends. You cannot win! You will never win!"

Mimi turned to him and said with her eyes. \_I hope you know what to do. He nodded in return.\_

—

Mimi was now completely calm now that she knew what to do. She spoke with an unnatural voice. She taunted, " Didn't anyone teach you, never say never? Sincerity Power!"

Matt followed her lead. " Friendship Transformation!"

Their crests began to glow even brighter and Metal Seadramon and Puppetmon had to look away because of the purity of the light, but

the DigiDestined and their Digimon couldn't take their eyes off of the spectacle.

When the light dissipated, it left two completely different people standing there. Mimi had been replaced by an older woman with short green hair and emerald green eyes. She was wearing a short, dark green dress that ended mid-thigh and Mimi's crest. On her forehead, she bore the symbol for sincerity.

Matt on the other hand, hadn't changed that much. He was still a blonde, but he was now taller. He wore some type of silver armor and the crest of friendship. He had a long dark blue cape. In his right hand, he carried a large sword and on his forehead, he bore the symbol of friendship. Deep sapphire eyes scanned the battlefield intensely.

“You know what you have to do!” said a mysterious voice.

—

“Yes, the new Matt replied. “ I must protect the Princess!”

—

“Good, said the voice as it faded away.”

—

He turned to look at the DigiDestined who were gaping in awe at them. He gave them a small smile to let them know that he was on their side. T.K. smiled back and relaxed.

He turned back to Puppetmon and Metal Seadramon. “ I am the Knight of Friendship!” he said. “ Prepare to meet your destruction!”

“ And I am the Soldier of Sincerity!” the new Mimi declared. “ I will destroy you!”

—

“ So you say!” yelled an irate Puppetmon. “ Puppet Pummel!” He shot multiple blasts out of his hammer. They were aimed at Mimi.

She didn't even bother to try to dodge it. She only whispered, “ Sincerity.” The blasts hit her dead on creating a cloud of dust, effectively blinding everyone for a few seconds.

“ No!” shouted Palmon who struggled against her bonds, but to no avail. “ Mimi!”

Puppetmon said, “ Well, now that was fun, but it wasn't what I'd call a challenge.” He turned and set his sights on a very angry Knight. “ Maybe he'd be more of a challenge. Puppet!”

Before he could launch his attack, a ball of green energy came from out of nowhere and crashed into the side of his head, sending the wooden digimon flying into a tree.

“ What was that?!” exclaimed Metal Seadramon.

" So, I wasn't much of a challenge huh Puppetmon?" asked a familiar voice.

The dust had cleared, and there, right where she stood before, stood the Soldier.

No one had a chance to respond because Metal Seadramon's tail whipped up from the ground and struck the Soldier sending her flying backwards into a tree.

" Maybe for Puppetmon, but not for me!" shouted Metal Seadramon. " River of Power!" The blast raced towards the unconscious Soldier.

A single phrase repeated in the Knight's mind. \_ One will fall. One will fall. One will fall—

—

\_ Well, he thought, \_ it's not going to be her! I must protect the Princess!\_\_

—

Before he could stop himself, he found himself standing directly in the path of the blast, using his sword to try and deflect most of the blow. His sword was surrounded by a blue aura which crackled with power. " Deflect!" he yelled as the aura expanded and formed a shield. The blast hit the shield and for a good amount of time, the shield held, but it could not hold forever. The shield broke and the blast hit the Knight sending him flying backwards. He hit the ground about 10 feet from where he last stood. For a moment, his persona flickered back to his normal then back to the Knight, then back again, and it continued flickering back and forth, eventually stopping on his normal persona.

The Soldier, who had woken up a short time ago, cried, " No! Matt!"

She pulled herself to her feet and whipped around to face Metal Seadramon causing the tears to fly from her eyes. She stood there and glared defiantly, not exactly sure what to do. She knew that she had to use something that Gennai had called the Strength of the Fallen, but she wasn't sure what that was.

\_ Think! She screamed. \_ What could it be? What?!\_\_

—

\_You know, Mimi, whispered a voice in her mind.\_

—

\_Is that you, Sora? Queried Mimi.\_

—

\_ Yes, said the voice. \_ Mimi you will know. \_\_

—

\_ In fact, whispered another voice that sounded like Tai's, \_ You are using it right now.\_\_

—

\_I am?\_

—

\_ Correct, said Izzy's mind.\_

—

\_ Go get 'em Mimi! Said Kari\_

—

\_ I believe in you, said T.K.\_

—

\_You can do it, said Joe.\_

—

\_ We believe in you. You have the power within! Use it and ours! Take our powers! Said Matt.\_

—

\_Yes, said everyone unanimously.\_

—

\_ " All right," she whispered aloud, "here goes!" She held her crest up in the air and beams of light shot out from the various crests and transferred their energy into hers. Again, she was surrounded by a blinding glow, and when this one vanished, the Soldier was no longer standing there, but a woman, the same height as the soldier, with longer green hair and a long, pale green dress. The symbol was gone from her forehead and was now in the center of a silver gown and a pair of angel wings unfolded behind her. They quivered slightly in a breeze. \_

—

" Who are you?" asked a stunned Metal Seadramon.

" I am Princess Sincerity!" the new figure announced. Metal Seadramon didn't get any time to react because the Princess turned once and held her hands out in front of her. She then held them up above her head and shouted. " Digital Teleport!" She was enveloped in a radiant green glow. Then, she vanished leaving behind only a few green sparkles which vanished after a second.

Metal Seadramon was dumbstruck, but he recovered and mumbled, "Well, she's gone, but we still have you." He turned to where the DigiDestined were held and was shocked to find that everyone of them had vanished with the Princess.

" No!!!!" he screamed. " Not again! Piedmon is \_not going to like this! "\_

—

\*\*\*

\*\*A short while laterâ€¦ \*\*

\*\*

"Mimi, Mimi, wake up," a soft voice prodded.

" No," Mimi groaned. " Just let me sleep."

" Mimi, wake up," the voice reiterated.

Reluctantly, Mimi opened her eyes and found herself staring into the face of Palmon whose large green eyes were filled with concern.

She bolted upright and looked around. They were no longer at their previous battlefield which had been at a place where the digital forest faded into a lovely beach. She found that they were now near a large deserted city, that she presumed was far from the beach they had just been at. She looked herself over and found that she was now Mimi again.

"What happened?" she asked no one in particular.

" You fulfilled the prophecy," said Izzy who was busy typing away at his laptop.

" I did?" she asked.

" Yes," Joe affirmed.

" That was so cool!" exclaimed T.K. " can you do it again?"

" I really don't know," she began.

" I'm afraid she can't, T.K.," said Matt as he walked over. " Don't you remember what Gennai said?"

" Oh, right, sorry," T.K. said apologetically.

Now Mimi was getting worried. " What \_did Gennai say?" she asked.\_

—

" Well," Sora began cautiously, " after you teleported us here, Gennai contacted us and said that the prophecy had been fulfilled by you. Well, he also said that it was a one-time use prophecy, so to speak."

" Huh?" Mimi asked now thoroughly confused.

" You can't do that again," Matt said quickly. " I can't either. That one transformation and the one time using those powers, drained too

much Crest Energy, the energy that allowed us to transform. Crest energy is a one time use, and since none of the others have high enough levels of Crest energy, no one can transform. Ever again."

" Oh," she replied.

" I wish Gennai would tell us these types of things sooner!" Tai stated angrily. " I mean, I wish that he'd explain everything plain and simple instead of giving us these stupid riddles! If you ask me, I think he's behind this whole evil digimon thing!"

Everyone stared at him, not believing what he just said.

"Did he just say what I thought he said?" Mimi whispered to Sora.

" I don't know," Sora replied monotonely.

No one spoke after that and a thick suffocating silence hung in the air, but Kari broke it.

" Tai!" Kari exclaimed, " don't say that!"

" Why?" he asked his sister.

" We all know that it's not true!" Kari stated. " He's doing the best he can! Maybe he doesn't even know what the prophecies mean. He could be just as lost and confused as we are! You don't know that he's evil!"

" We don't know that he's not either. And besides, why are you bothering to defend him? You didn't have to do all the things we had to do for him! Are you evil or something?! Who knows? You could be!" Tai retorted crossing his arms defiantly. Kari looked away, not wanting anyone to see the tears in her eyes. How could anyone, especially her own brother, think that? It was true that she'd only been in the digiworld a short time, but she knew she was not evil. Her digimon used to be on the wrong side, but now Gatomon was her digimon and Kari knew that they both had hearts of gold. Why would anyone think that she was evil?

She turned and ran over to Gatomon who was watching the whole scenario. Gatomon tried her best to comfort her human friend while all the while sending death glares at Tai.

" Enough!" Sora exclaimed now thoroughly angry. " Tai! Look what you've done!" She walked over to Kari and Gatomon. "Kari has a good point and you do too, but maybe we shouldn't concentrate on petty things like that. We should concentrate on things like defeating the Dark Masters and saving the digiworld. Maybe then we could deal with this problem!"

" Besides," Mimi began, " we might not know whether he is truly good or evil, but in the past, he has always given us good advice. When things went wrong was when we didn't pay attention to it."

Everyone turned to Mimi, surprised that she was being so non-ditzy today.

" You know," Izzy stated, " I think that energy did something to her. She doesn't seem like herself."

" Whaddya mean I don't seem like myself you little computer geek pipsqueak?!" she yelled angrily.

" Just what I said," he reiterated.

Mimi fumed, ready to lash out, but Palmon, thankully said, " Mimi, maybe you should get some sleep. I'd think you'd be tired after using all that energy."

She tried to stifle a yawn and said, " Yeah, I'm tired, but not tired enough to sleep. I think I'll go pick some berries or something. Come on Palmon." She and the small plant digimon left the group behind.

Biyomon sighed. Another fight avoided, but they still had the first one to deal with. Tai and Sora were still sending each other death glares. Now, Biyomon was ticked, was this ever going to stop? \_ Well, she thought, \_it's definitely going to end now!.\_\_

—

" BREAK IT UP!" she yelled at the top of her lungs. Everyone turned to her and stared, uncertain exactly what to do, but they eventually broke up and moved to different ends of the small clearing doing various things, working in comfortable silence.

\*\*\*

## A short while laterâ€|

" Wow!" exclaimed Mimi, " that was the best meal I've had in a long time! Wow!"

Tai stared at her, a look of incredulity upon his face before turning back to his bowl of thin vegetable soup. He scooped some up in a makeshift spoon before dumping it back into the makeshift wooden bowl. It splattered, making ripples in the thin, watered down liquid. He stared at his miscolored reflection in the pale orange soup as the ripples hit it causing it to waver.

He was so mad at himself. How could he have ever have said what he did?! What came over him? Truthfully, he didn't know, but he had an idea. Jealousy.

When Gennai had given them that prophecy, for some bizarre reason, he thought that he would be the one to save the group. He had always wanted to do something like that. He \_had been one of the ones who fulfilled the Mega prophecy, so, he thought that he might be the one to fulfill this one. For some reason, he thought that the others weren't worthy of it. He was the leader, he should have the greatest power, but now he knew. He knew that that superiority complex was the exact reason he hadn't been chosen. The purest heart had been picked, but the person also had to be physically strong enough to endure the transformation.\_

—

Everyone's crests had a certain amount of energy, but it seemed that certain crests generated more energy than others. His crest had power

to make Augumon digivolve to the ultimate level, but he knew, in his heart, he knew that it's powers didn't run any deeper. Of course, there was one other who's crest might have hidden powersâ€¦

Kari. Her name rang in his mind as did the awful fact of what he had said today. Kari was a forgiving child. Normally, she didn't think of herself; normally, all she cared about was everyone else. His mind wandered as he remembered something she had said a long time ago. She had almost died once because of him, but that didn't matter to her. All she had cared about was that he was disappointed in her. As for what had happened today, he didn't know if she would forgive him. He knew that she really didn't have to. No one deserved to be treated like that, especially not his own sister.

Thoughts raged around in Tai's head, making it feel as though his head was going to explode. He couldn't stand it anymore. He set his soup bowl down in the dirt, got up and walked away into the forest without saying a word.

\*\*\*

Everyone saw him get up and they all sat a moment unable to respond, then, Sora and Kari decided to go after him. They and their digimon got up and walked off in the direction in which Tai was headed.

Mimi, Izzy, Joe, Matt, T.K., their digimon and Augumon decided to wait at the campsite, but, eventually, after no one coming back after half an hour, Augumon, Izzy, Joe, Tentomon and Gomamon decided to set out and find the others.

Matt had said that T.K. was not allowed to go with the others, so T.K. sat and talked with Patamon who still sported some bruises from the battle.

Mimi slept against a nearby rock, presumably worn out from the battle considering the incredible amount of energy she had expended.

Meanwhile, Gabumon and Matt sat in silence, staring out into space, not exactly sure if there was anything to be said. Eventually, Gabumon broke the silence by saying, " That was really brave what you did today."

Matt turned his head so that he could see the digimon. "What'd I do?" he asked.

" Well," Gabumon began, " you almost lost your lifeâ€¦"

"Oh that," he said interrupting the digimon. " I was told that I had to do that. There was thisâ€¦voice in my head that said, 'you have to protect the Princessâ€¦' and it left it at that. At first, I wasn't exactly sure what it meant, I thought that maybe, just maybe somewhere along the line, I'd watched too much Star Wars and that was just a recollection or something like that, but whenâ€¦it happened, I realized what I had to do. Nothing more."

" Oh, okay," said Gabumon before slipping into silence again. They sat mutely for a couple more minutes until they were disturbed by a slight noise. Both looked around for the source, but neither found



one. Gabumon surmised that maybe the others had returned, but when they looked around, neither saw them, so they settled back into silence. By this time, having waited quite a while for the others, T.K. and Patamon had fallen asleep in front of the fire. Matt, concerned about his little brother kept a watchful eye over him, while trying to catch some shut eye himself, but was unable to because of the unnerving feeling he had that he was being watched.

He scanned the surrounding area for some sign of intelligent life, but his gaze was only met by dirt and trees. \_ Com'n he thought, \_ you're letting your imagination get away with you. You have to keep a clear head! You can't go getting worried with every little bump in the night now. Don't go and cry wolf. You've gotta relax!\_\_

—

Shaking his head as though that might dislodge all unsettling thoughts, he tilted his head back and stared up at the starless sky above him. A night wind swept through the trees above causing them to rustle and making the flames of the fire jump up and lick hungrily at the sky. The wind soared through the treetops causing a shower of leaves to cascade down upon him like snow. Was it just him, or did the leaves seem to be falling in slow motion, as though he were watching a video? \_No! he thought. \_ You're definitely going senile now! SNAP OUT OF IT!!!!!\_\_

—

Now he was worried. Never before had he been so jumpy or so flustered. He brought his hand up to his face and stared at his shaking limb as memories of the battle floated around in his mind, before tilting his head back towards the sky again.

### Why? He thought, why did \*I\* have to be given these powers? Why did I have to be the one who fell? Why?

" It's called destiny," a voice answered.

Flustered that he had voiced his thoughts out loud, he looked around for the source of the speech. In the semi-darkness, he saw a pair of chocolate eyes peering intently at him.

" Mimi?!" he spluttered, " I.. I said that out loud?!"

She nodded at him as she moved nearer to the fire.

" Oh, I didn't mean to imply that"

" I know," she said as though all his statements had already been spoken. She spoke with some kind of inner knowledge as she stared into the fire, the flames dancing in her eyes.

"What you did today was brave" for you I mean".that's not what I mean" he said, not exactly sure what to say.

She gave him a tired smile. " It's okay, I know what you mean."

Now he was worried. This was definitely not the same ditzy airhead

Mimi that everyone knew. This seemed to be another side of her personality, the sincere side that allowed Palmon to digivolve to Lillymon.

For a long time they sat in silence, not talking, not making a sound, and both were just fine with that. Neither wanted to speak, so neither did.

The flames danced and the wind blew gently through the treetops with a slight whistling sound. For a long time, the wind was the only sound in the desolate landscape, but eventually, Mimi spoke.

" So," she began uneasily, " where are all the others."

" Tai walked off and they went after him. I told T.K. to stay here so I stayed with him, and you were just asleep."

" Oh," she said slowly as though making some kind of important inner decision. " Listen," she began again, " there's something that I've been waiting to say and now seems like the best time to say it, especially after what happened today"

His curiosity was peaked. " What?" he asked.

" Well," she began softly, her voice barely above a whisper, " after what happened today, with the possibility of you dying and all, well," she paused.

" Well what?" he asked.

" Well," she said as she stared more intensely into the fire, " I just wanted to say" she held her breath for a second as though to calm herself before proceeding. She felt more than nervous. This was it though, it was now or never. She had to say it! She had to tell him; there might never be a better time. " I just wanted to tell you I love you," she blurted out unable to contain those three words any longer.

It took her a few seconds to realize that she had actually said that and when she came to terms with reality, she clamped her hands over her mouth and blushed fiercely.

It seemed that he was just as shocked as she was, for he sat there, his mouth open. He seemed unable to speak, unable to react.

For the longest minute in both their lives, they sat in silence, taking that minute to regain their wits and attempt to speak.

Internally, she was screaming at herself for saying that. She couldn't believe it! Oh how she wished she could take back those words, but it was too late. Well, at least T.K. and the digimon hadn't heard, and for that she was grateful. She was confused as to how she was supposed to react, but all her questions were answered when he burst out into profuse laughter.

She was unable to conceal her total surprise and amazement at that. " What's so funny?" she asked angrily.

He kept laughing for a few minutes without answering her question.

She opened her mouth to ask again, when he responded.

" What's so funny, is that I suppose that you expect me to say, 'I love you too'. Ha! That's what's so funny! NO! It's not just funny, it's hilarious!" He burst out into laughter again.

She was now confused and upset and tears were beginning to well in her eyes, but she blinked them away, refusing to let them fall. " Butâ€|but what about what you did today? You risked your life to save mine. Didn't you?"

He stopped laughing and turned to face her, his face now serious. " Yes I did, but the only reason I did that, was because I was told to. Immediately after the transformation, I heard a voice tell me that I must protect the princess. Since you were the other person who transformed, I assumed that it was you and I did what the voice said to. After all, who am I to argue with disembodied voices?" he asked nonchalantly. " Anyway, truthfully, I would care less if you \_died today. I wouldn't have protected you if I wasn't told to. It's as plain as black and white."\_

—

The tears welled in her eyes again, but this time, she didn't bother to blink them back this time. She was too shocked to even react. Besides, she truly didn't care what he thought anymore. She had let him into one of the deepest parts of her soul, and he had killed her.

She didn't care anymore. What he thought didn't matter anymore. She let the hot, salty tears flow freely from her eyes. She hoped that he was getting his sick satisfaction from this. She couldn't understand why he didn't just let her down easily, why he had to go and crush her heart like that.

For a long while, she just sat and cried, her tears splattering to the dirt, but eventually, she moved back to her original position and leaned against the rock, slipping into sleep. But, before she fell asleep, she cast him one more hurt glance before closing her eyes and falling into the comfort of sleep.

What she didn't notice, was that after she fell asleep, tears of his own began to fall. He didn't want to do that. He didn't want to hurt her like that, but he saw no other choice. It was either that, or hurt her later. In his heart, he thought that he was doing the right thing. He knew he was no good for her. He didn't want her to find that out the hard way. He felt horrible at breaking her heart like that, but that was the only way he could say it. He could never let her know his true feelings.

He sat, lost in thought, before he heard another rustling in the bushes. This time though, there was a cause other than the wind and his imagination. It turned out that after a few hours, the others had returned, babbling and chattering happily, especially Tai and Kari who seemed to have worked out their problem. No one seemed to notice a lone pink clad figure with diamond tears in her eyes.

Sora though, cast an I-know-what-you-did look towards him, and he cringed at her harsh glare and he said with his eyes, \_I did what I did for her own good. You know it too.\_



from Sailor Moon, but I still created the idea . K? The time frame is sorta messed up I think, but bear with it. Please. Be forewarned, this gets a bit scary in parts!Well onto the story!\*\*

\* \*

[illegible]

\* \*

## # Part Two: Reunion

[illegible]

\* \*

Matt came out of his daydream and it took him a second to realize where he was. He looked around and realized that he was in his car. Then, he remembered the traffic light. He looked up at it again, expecting it to have changed already. Once again, but not really to his surprise, he found that it still hadn't changed.

\_All right, he thought, \_ this is *\*really\** getting on my nerves! Is this light *\*ever\** going to change???

---

He tapped impatiently on the steering wheel and looked around at nothing before realizing that the radio was on. He managed to 'tune' his mind back in in time to hear the announcer say, "Up next, 'The Lover After Me' by Savage Garden. Enjoy the music and drive safely."

\_Huh? He thought, \_How weird! This sounds like it would fit my previous thoughts perfectly! But enough about me and my stray thoughts, \_ I really do feel horrible about the way I treated Mimi (A/N: Geez, you should!) \_ I just can't help but wonder what ever happened to her. I wonder, did she ever find another person to love? His thoughts were cut short as the song began.\_\_\_\_\_

---

Here I go again I promised myself I wouldn't think of you today

It's been seven months and counting

You've moved on

I still feel exactly the same

It's just that everywhere I go

All the buildings know your name

Like photographed memories of love

Steel and granite reminders  
The city calls your name and I can't pretend  
Ever since you've been gone  
The lights go out the same  
The only difference is  
You call another name  
To your love  
To your lover now  
To your love  
The lover after me.  
Am I all alone in the universe?  
There's no love on there streets  
I have given mine away to a world that didn't want it anyway  
So this is my new freedom  
It's funny  
I don't remember being chained  
But nothing seems to make sense anymore  
Without you I'm always twenty minutes late  
Ever since you've been gone  
The lights go out the same  
The only difference is  
You call another name  
To your love  
To your lover now  
To your love  
The lover after me  
And time goes by so slowly  
The nights are cold and lonely  
I shouldn't be holding on  
But I'm still holding on for you.

Here I go again,  
I promised myself I wouldn't think of you today  
But I'm standing at your doorway  
I'm calling out your name because I can't move on  
Ever since you've been gone  
The lights go out the same  
The only difference is  
You call another name  
To your love  
To your lover now  
To your love  
The lover after me.

As the song faded away, he thought of how often he had wondered what had happened to her. In fact, after every failed relationship, he thought of seeking her out again, but he never got around to it for some bizarre reason.

He had heard of her often, seeing as she was a famous model. She was in New York around the same time he had been, but he had never made any attempts to contact her. For some reason, he thought that if she really wanted to talk, that she'd contact him first, but no such luck for him. He'd hung around in New York for quite a bit before he met Miriam, and, as said before, had attempted to locate his friend, but he didn't find them either. In fact, there was no sign of anyone he knew. As for her, she might not have even known that he was there because of her busy schedule or something along those lines. \_ But, he thought, \_ why should she even think about talking to you after what you did? \_Maybe she really does hate you. You really do have no right to ask for her forgiveness, even if you did what you did to help her, you shouldn't have done it that way! You shouldn't have! You could've found some other way! You should've! Now I realize only part of the pain that she must've felt! He pounded his fists on the steering wheel again. \_ I just wish I could tell her I was sorry, but who am I to think that she'd talk to me after what I did?  
Who?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Another noisy cacophony of car horns and yells jerked him out of his reverie in time to realize that the everlasting traffic light had \_finally changed. Eager to get out of the city and away from these hideously long traffic lights, he hit the gas and sped onto the Turnpike and out of sight of the city.\_

## Outside the Orlando Airport

" Are you sure you'll be okay," Izzy asked.

" Yeah," reiterated Joe, " we're only in Florida for three days for this business trip then we have to fly back to Japan, but I'm sure that we could get you a ticket if you think it'll be safer there"

" No," Mimi said cutting him off with a wave of her hand. " That's probably the first place he'll look for me. I don't think that he'd expect me to still be in the States. I'll probably be safe for a while here."

" But, Mimi.." began Joe.

" Not that, I'm Lin now, remember?"

" Oh, right," said Joe, " Lin."

" But Lin," he began, " I mean, he found you at the airport and I assume that he knows your new name too. Who knows? He might already be in Florida!"

" Joe," Mimi began, " you're still the pessimist aren't you?"

" Yeah"well," he muttered.

" Anyway," Mimi continued, " I'll be \_fine here. I can always get out of here if anything comes up." \_

—

" Okay," Izzy said hesitantly, " but, if you ever come to Japan in need of help, you can go to Tai and Sora. Here's their address." He scribble something on a piece of paper and handed it to her. She took it and stared at it before putting it in her purse.

" Huh?" Mimi asked, " what do you mean \_their address?" \_

—

" You mean, you didn't know?" Joe asked. " They got married about a year or two ago!"

" They did?!" Mimi exclaimed excitedly, " Oh! I wish I could've been there!"

" Sora really wanted all the Digidestined to be there, she even invited Daisuke, Miyako and Iori. She tried to get in contact with you, but she didn't know where to call."

Mimi giggled. " There must've been trouble between T.K. and Daisuke!"

" You bet there was!" exclaimed Joe. " They almost started a fist fight during the banquet!"

" It must've been so funny!" she exclaimed.



Izzy nodded in agreement and said, " Luckily, Kari got wise to this and worked out some kind of deal with the both of them."

" She sounds like she's grown up a lot," she said.

" Yeah and all the others have."

" Well," said Izzy, " not everyone."

" What do you mean?" she asked.

" Well, for example," Izzy began, " T.K. and Daisuke, although older, still fight but not as bad as they used to."

" And," added Joe, " Tai and Matt used to fight too until Matt moved to America."

" He moved here!" she exclaimed, shocked, " when?!"

" I don't know exactly," said Izzy, " I'm guessing about 6 years ago, but it's probably been longer."

" Oh," she sighed. " I wish I'd known sooner," she whispered. It took her a couple of moments to realize that she had voice that aloud. She turned around, red-faced to Izzy and Joe who seemed to have heard nothing. Either that, or they were feigning ignorance. Relieved that they didn't appear to have heard that, she turned to look at the never-ending stream of cars that flowed through the airport, trying to hail a taxi.

\*\*\*

## A little while laterâ€|

It had taken them forever, but somehow, eventually, the three Digidestined managed to hail a cab using methods moreâ€|appropriate than those they had used when they first returned from digiworld to find the 8th child. Mimi, turned to her two friends, sorry to say goodbye, but at the same time, she knew that she had to if she was going to continue on with her life. Her duffel bag had been put in the trunk, but she kept her purse with her. Joe and Izzy had already paid the driver, seeing as she had little money with her.

Not wanting to say goodbye, she tried to avoid saying it by standing in silence.

As if reading her thoughts, Joe said, " Hey, it's not goodbye yet. We'll probably all run into each other again. All right?"

Sadly, she nodded and said, " I guessâ€|I'll see both of you around then. So, I'd better get going. Once I get things settled here, I'll come and visit you all. I promise. Ok?"

" Yeah," said Joe. " You'd better get going, as had we. We've got a meeting to get to. See you soon," he said as he walked away.

" Same here," said Izzy hurriedly as he too walked away.

She stood on the curb and stared sadly into the crowd, wishing that her friends didn't have to leave, but she knew that she had to stay

here. This was probably the safest place for her. She didn't want it to be that way, but she knew it had to be. It was safe here, well, at least she thought it was. Still, though, something nagged at her mind, as though she'd left something behind, something that could alert him to where she was, but she couldn't place her finger on it.

She would have thought about it even more, but the cabbie said gruffly, " Hey lady, are you gonna get in?"

" Uh, yeah," she said brokenly as she turned around to enter the cab. When she had gotten in and seated herself, she pulled the greasy seatbelt across her and secured it and told the cabbie that she was ready to go.

" Sure thing, lady," said the cabbie as he looked out the window to see when he could reenter the normal traffic flow. He sat for a few minutes and looked out at the flow whereas Mimi was staring out of the window for no particular reason. She just felt like looking out of the window.

Thoughts flew through her mind, thoughts about her life since Digiworld, her career, her loves. Somehow, thoughts of Frank found their way to her mind, and she tried to shut them away, and she was partly successful. She turned away from the window. Determined to be happy, she tried to think what it would've been like to go to Tai and Sora's wedding. She could almost imagine the joy in the air, and then the tension between T.K. and Daisuke. She giggled softly at that, glad for them, but at the same time wishing that she could be experiencing happiness rather than fear.

Then, unexpectedly, she had the unrelenting urge to look out of the window again. She didn't fight it and soon found herself looking back towards the terminal again. At first, she didn't know why she had to look out the window, but she soon found reason enough. In the middle of the crowd, Izzy and Joe came running back towards the cab. They both had looks of fear and apprehension on their faces and they both looked a bit dishelved. Chills raced up and down her spine. Why would they come back when they were already running the risk of taking the heat from their superiors? It would only be if something was really wrong.

She felt the cabbie began to ease the car into the flow of traffic, but she shouted, " Please wait a minute!"

The cabbie, in response, hit the brakes and halted the car. " Sure lady," he muttered.

She pushed open the door and stepped out to meet her friends again.

" Joe, what's going on?" she asked, nervously.

" You might want to get back in the cab," Izzy said. " We just received a disturbing call from one of our business associates who was supposed to travel down here at a later date, about a week from now. He said that he had gone to the airport to collect his E-ticket early. He had done so, but, as he was walking in the parking lot to his car, he was ambushed by a man with a gun who fit Frank's description."

She gasped. " Is he all right?"

" Yes," said Joe hurriedly, " but, the man, stole our friend's ticket, passport and wallet. Somehow, Frank knew that our friend was coming down here and somehow, he knows you're down here too! You have to escape. Got to Japan!"

" No!" she said firmly. " I'm not leaving! He's coming a week from now. By that time, he'll have little chance of finding me. I'm not going! I'm not running! I'm not going to let him control my life!"

With that, she turned and climbed back into the cab. Through the glass of the window, she could hear Izzy say, " But Mi..Lin!"

She didn't pay attention to them, she just kept staring straight ahead as she told the cabbie to go this time.

" Sure, lady," said the cabbie again as he pulled out into the traffic. She turned to look back at them one more time, and the looks on their faces tore at her heart. She knew that they were only trying to protect her, but she was adamant that he was not going to make her run like a scared animal. She was going to stand her ground. If there was one thing her experiences in the Digiworld had taught her, it was that.

\*\*\*

## A while laterâ€¦|

" Thanks again," Mimi said to the cabbie as he climbed back into his cab. ( He had helped her get her bag out of the trunk.)

" Sure Lady," said the cabbie as he drove off leaving her in front of a tall, brown apartment building. During the cab ride, she'd pulled out the papers that Teresa had given her and found a handwritten note that said:

\_ Mimi,\_

\_

\_ Well, Lin anyway, if you are reading this, it obviously means that I have given you a plane ticket with this. I hope you did get away from New York, for your own safety. The reason I have given you this note, is to warn you. What I am about to tell you may seem unbelievable, but I am asking you to \*\*Trust me. That is all I ask. \*Hint hint\* I have had a glimpse of the future and I must tell you this, you will be safe in Florida, but only for a little while. I do not know how long, but I would tell you if I did. I want you to be careful! Try to stay one step ahead of him.\*\*\_

\_\*\*

\_ As for your time in Florida, I lied. I have no half cousin in Florida ( but if I did, I doubt you would have gone to her anyway) Still, I knew where you are going to go, ( or are if you are reading this in Florida) so, I have taken the liberty of getting a job for you. It may seem like nothing, but believe me if you take any other

job, your future will be not as happy as if you take this one, So, if you don't get my point, TAKE THIS JOB!!!! Okay?\_

\_

\_ As for a place for you to stay, I know that you will be ( or are) standing in front of a large brown apartment building, so, go in, and tell the landlord that you are Lin Hishika. She will give you a key for an apartment on the fourth floor. It is already furnished; it has everything you need for your stay. \_

\_

\_ As for the job, if you look to your right, you should see a small building, that on the front, says All Night Diner. That's where your job is. You are scheduled to begin work the night you arrive in Florida, so I suggest you hurry. The hours are long, but the job will be rewarding. I'm counting on your skills as a former waitress to help you. Trust me on this. All right.\_

\_

\_ Well, since you start tonight, I suggest that you don't stand and stare at this paper. Get going! Your shift starts at 3:00 P.M. and ends at 12:00 A.M. all right? Well, see you around, Lin!\_

\_

#### Teresa Foster

\_"Trust me" \_

\_

\_ \_

\_

Mimi folded the letter and put it back in her purse. She smiled at the humor in the letter, and she was grateful for all of Teresa's help. \_She did all that for me. Mimi smiled as she thought, \_Thank you. Thank you for everything Teresa\_

—

She looked down at her watch and saw that it was 2:30 P.M.

" Oh!" she said to herself. " I'd better get going! I don't want to be late for my first day on the job!" She turned looked up at the apartment building. " But, first things first."

She picked up her duffel bag and walked into the building.

\*\*\*

\*\*Inside the building.\*\*

\*\*

As she walked, Mimi took in the scheme of the building. \_Ugh! She thought, \_ This place is hideous! Look at that color scheme! Who picked it?! The walls were painted, what had probably once been a blue color, but now had faded and left the walls paint bare in places. The carpet, on the other hand, was probably at one time a crimson color, but it was now more of a dull brownish-red. \_Like blood, she thought with a shiver before turning back to the hallway.\_\_\_\_

—

The hallway was rather short, but from what she could see, Mimi could tell that this had probably been an old hotel, for there was a reception desk to her left. On the desk, she saw a small silver bell with a sign next to it that said, \_Please Ring for Assistance, in bold, black letters. She rang the bell, but from a room adjacent to the desk, she heard a woman's voice say, " Sorry, all of our apartments are rented out. Try the building down the street."\_

—

Mimi looked over at the key rack across from her and saw two sets of keys hanging next to each other. " But there are two sets of keys left," she said.

" Yes," came the woman's voice, " but those rooms are rented."

" Oh," said Mimi defeated. " I thought my friend booked one of those rooms for me. My name is Lin Hishikaâ€|"

" Oh!" exclaimed the woman as she came out of the room. She looked about 50 with gray hair that had probably once been blond, tied up in a bun on the back of her head. She was very tall and very skinny. " You're Lin Hishika?"

" Yes I am," said Mimi.

" Oh, oh oh!" exclaimed the woman. " I'm so sorry! I should've asked your name first! How foolish of me!"

The woman reached over to the key rack and removed one of the sets of keys from the rack and handed\_ one of them to Mimi.\_

—

" Now," said the woman, " my name is Laura Richen, the landlord. If you have any problems with anything, call me, my number is posted next to the phone. Your apartment number is 436. It's on the fourth floor. You take the stairs, sorry we don't have an elevator, up to the 4th floor. Once you're there, you turn left and head all the way down the corridor. When you get to the very end of the hallway, the room is the one on the left. Now, all of your bills have been paid for the next year, so you don't have to worry about that. Got all that?"

" Yeah," Mimi nodded, " but where are the stairs?"

" Over there," said Laura as she pointed to a set of double doors. " Anything else?"

" Yes," she paused, " this is sorta difficult to ask, but, um, is there another way out of the apartment, other than the stairs?"

" Oh yes," said Laura as though every person who came in asked that, " the fire escape is right outside your window. Anything else?"

" Oh, no," said Mimi. "Thank you Laura."

" Good luck, Ms. Lin," she said, " and remember, call me if you need anything."

" All right," said Mimi as she walked away.

\*\*\*

## Four flights of stairs and many steps laterâ€¦|

" Well," Mimi said to herself, " this is it." She stood outside the door of her apartment. She knew it was hers because there were big brass numbers on it that proclaimed 436. Setting down the duffel bag, she inserted the key into the lock and turned. She pushed the door open and carried her things inside with her, not forgetting to lock the door behind her.

She took a quick tour of the room which had once been a hotel room. She knew for certain now. As soon as you walked in the door, to your right, there was a small hollow in which to put whatever you had brought with you, and on your left was a small bathroom. Directly ahead of her, was the bedroom with a large window. Half of the bedroom had been converted to a kitchen.

In the bathroom, there was a small shower, sink and toilet. Just enough for her. In the bedroom, there was a large queen sized bed which was surprising. She shrugged it off and welcomed the extra room. The bedroom was carpeted in a rich royal blue and the walls were painted white. The corner that had become the kitchen however, was lined with linoleum. In the kitchen, there was a small counter which had a sink on top of it and a small cupboard under the sink. Next to the sink, there was a small, ancient stove/oven. Next to the stove, there was an empty counter top and next to that, there was a coffee maker, and next to that, there was a fridge. Near the window, there was a small circular table with a cheap lamp on top of it. There was also two chairs. Near the table, there hung a wall mounted phone.

Then there was the bed. On either side of that, there were two wall mounted lamps and a small side table with drawers. On top of one, there was a clock, and on top of the other, there was a small radio. Across from her bed, there was a tv mounted on the wall.

That was basically it for the apartment, but it was enough for her. She put her duffel bag into the space near the door and she sat down on her bed for a second, wondering what to do.

Something bothered her about Laura. She was nice and all that, but for some reason, when Mimi had said that her name was Lin Hishika, the woman became excruciatingly friendly. Maybe there was something to that, but still, there was something about her that convinced Mimi she was a friend. Mimi, uncertain what to do, looked at her watch. It

read 2:50.

" Uh oh," she said. " I'd better get to work!" She picked up her purse and keys and walked out the door, which she locked after she left the apartment. She tossed the keys into her bag and bolted down the stairs. On her way out, she said ,bye, to Laura who in turn smiled at her and watched her leave.

When Mimi was gone, Laura smiled to herself and turned to walk out of the desk area. As she turned, a long jacket which she had been wearing, lifted a bit and a glimpse of magenta was seen, but nothing more after that as she walked out the door.

\*\*\*

Mimi stood outside of the building for a few minutes, uncertain of which way to go, but then she remembered what Teresa had told her. \_Go rightâ€| \_

—

At first, Mimi headed to her right, but she felt that wasn't right somehow. Then she remembered that she had been facing the building when she had read the letter, so she headed to what was now her left.

After walking a short distance and crossing a small street, she found herself in front of a building that read, All Night Diner in big red letters on the window.

\_ Well, this is it, she thought as she pushed the door open. A small bell jingled softly to announce her arrival, and a few people looked up from what they were doing to see who had come in. For a moment, she stood on the threshold of the door, uncertain whether or not to proceed. Her choice was taken from her, when a woman about her age, with short brown hair and green eyes, whose name tag read, Suzie, came up to her and asked, " Excuse me, Ma'am," she began, " but are you Lin Hishika?"\_

—

Before Mimi had a chance to reply, another woman interrupted. She was tall, with black hair and brown eyes. Her name tag read Hilary.

" Give it a rest, Suzie," said Hilary. " Stop bothering the customers." Suzie gave an apologetic look, but Mimi waved it away and said. " Yes, I am Lin Hishika. Nice to meet you, Suzie, Hilary."

Their eyes widened for a moment, but then another woman who had overheard, came running up to Mimi and handed her a bag with an apron, a notepad, a pen and a name tag that read Lin, in it.

The woman herself was probably a little older than Suzie. She had brown hair and brown eyes. Her name tag read Rachel. " Here," said the woman without introducing herself. She pointed to a small door. " You can put your purse in there. I suppose you know how to wait on tables, so I'll leave you to it. Any tips you get, you keep." With that, Rachel ran off, leaving Mimi with a surprised look on her face.

" Don't worry, Lin," said Suzie reassuringly, " you'll get used to her with time." With that, she and Hilary ran off also.

Without another thought, Mimi went into the side room and hung her purse on an empty hook. She removed the apron from the bag and secured it over her clothes. She found a large pocket in it, so she put her notebook and pen in it; she pinned the name tag on her apron and walked out into the crowded restaurant and went to work.

\*\*\*

## Somewhere on the Florida Turnpike€|

Matt put down his cellphone on the empty passenger seat. It looked like he had a place to stay for tonight, but after tonight, he would be gone again. He couldn't believe his luck. He got the last room in the apartment building nearest the turnpike exit in a city with which he was familiar. He didn't know why he just didn't rent a hotel room, but something told him that renting an apartment, might be better. Come to think of it, the landlord had given him a good deal. It was far cheaper than a hotel room. ( \$27 dollars for the night.) But still, something told him to take that room, something, something€|

\_Oh stop it! He shouted at himself. \_You're going to drive yourself crazy! Stop it!\_\_

—

Trying to take his mind off things, he turned the radio up. Right now, there was a weather report on, and up next, the traffic report, then the current news.

\_ Good, he thought, \_ I haven't had a chance to keep up with the news lately. Maybe now, I'll find out what's going on in the world.

—

—

A minute later, the weather report was done, and the traffic report was on. As far as he could see, the traffic was pretty good. Right now, he was going as fast as the limit would allow without him getting a ticket. He was still upset about what happened with Lisa, but right now, he felt a million miles away. He increased the speed a little bit more.

Now, the current news was on and he paid attention to this.

" And now," said the announcer, " in current news, the missing Andrew's child has not been located yet. He is five years old, with black hair and black eyes. He was last seen a week ago. The police have offered a \$10,000 dollar reward for any information leading to his return."

\_Poor kid, he thought, \_ I hope they find him soon.\_\_

—

" Also, another unidentified body had been found in a ditch along



I-95. It seems that this murder is the work of the Highway Killer. This is his fifth victim, and the police still have no idea as to his identity or whereabouts."

\_ Whoa! Thought Matt, \_ I hope they catch him soon!\_\_

—

\_ " Hurricane Kate has been downgraded to a Tropical storm. The downgrade was made last night, by the weather bureau. Clean-ups are still continuing in the Keys which were badly hit by Kate."\_

—

\_ Poor people, he thought.\_

—

He was getting impatient of listening to the news. He wanted to hear some music, so he reached over to turn the radio dial, but the next words out of the announcer's mouth stopped him.

The announcer's voice became grim.

" Folks," he said. " for those of you who have been keeping up with the news, you know that the world has lost a great woman, and today as every other day for the past week, this station is going to honor her. As most of you know, we have been holding a moment of silence in her honor, every day since she died, and we will continue to do so until a memorial service is scheduled. For those of you who have not kept up with the news, I will tell you who we are talking about."

\_ That would be me, he thought, \_Mr. Clueless.\_\_

—

" The woman we are talking about was a great asset to many industries, and she helped many people and inspired many others. Not only was she beautiful, she was a great and talented singer."

Something in him snapped and his heart clenched fearfully. \_No, he thought, \_ please no!\_\_

—

" I will give the rest again, so that we may honor her memory and prevent such tragedies in the future. Model and actress, Mimi Tachikawa, after being in a coma for the past four months caused by her abusive fiancé, went into cardiac arrest and died a week ago."

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> <meta name="ProgId"> Every Rose Has It's Thorns
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Every Rose Has It's  
Thorns

[illegible]

\* \*

\*\* Disclaimer: As usual, Digimon does not belong to me, it belongs to the people at Toei and Bandai and all of them. You know what I mean. Also, the first set of lyrics are from Savage Garden's "The Lover After Me" they belong to Columbia records, not to me. The second set of lyrics belongs to, well is copyrighted by Nintendo. It is from the Pokemon Movie Album. \*Dodges flying things\* Aah! Hey, well, it fit perfectly, I just felt that either I use that, or I write my own song, and this option seemed the easiest. K? Oh, also, for that PKMN song, I had to improvise a little on the lyrics ( Gomen \*\_\*;;), cause I couldn't really get them. I tried, I searched the Internet, but I couldn't find them, so I had to get them from off the CD cause the little booklet thing didn't have the lyrics. K? Also, the third set of lyrics are from the Celine Dion CD, Let's Talk About Love. It's the song, "Love Is on the Way." That's not mine either. Well, any mention of Celeste and Natalie, belongs to me. The plot idea also belongs to me. Well, that's all for the disclaimer. Onto the Author's Note!\*\*

\* \*

**\*\*Author's Note:** Well, as promised, Matt will play a major part in this part! ( But I have to bash him a little.) It's almost completely from his P.O.V. except for like a few tiny parts that have to do with Mimi all right? Also, in this part, Matt's in Florida. K? Oh, BTW, this story begins about a day or so after Mimi left the hospital. If you have no idea what I'm talking about, I suggest you read part one. Also, the Soldier of Sincerity and the Knight of Fiendship are partly from Sailor Moon, but I still created the idea . K? The time frame is sorta messed up I think, but bear with it. Please. Be forewarned, this gets a bit scary in parts!Well onto the story!\*\*

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[illegible]

\* \*

## # Part Two: Reunion

[illegible]

\* \*

His foot, in an unconscious action, slammed on the brakes bringing the car to a screeching halt in the middle of the freeway. He couldn't

believe what had just been said. Part of him realized that he had stopped in the middle of the Turnpike, so he pulled off into the service lane, shut off the car and sat behind the wheel for a long while as there was a moment of silence.

The outside world spun and swirled around him, as his mind tried to grasp what it had just heard, twisting and turning, scrutinizing every word, trying to make sense, but right now, that concept seemed vague, as though it was something he could not understand. Or maybe, something he didn't want to understand.

His fist came down hard upon the steering wheel, sending bolts of pain screaming through his hand, but it was nothing compared to the intense pain that ravaged his heart. He put his sore hand to his chest and grabbed hold of his shirt, hoping that maybe this was just a dream. He pinched himself hard, to confirm that this was indeed not a dream. He leaned back in his seat and stared up blankly at the gray ceiling of his car, his mind spinning and his heart breaking.

\_ No! his mind screamed. \_ It can't be! It can't!\_\_

—

\_ But it is. The realization brought him crashing down to earth. She was gone. She \_was gone. She was gone forever, never able to return. He would never get to tell her the truth.\_\_

—

He was aware, that the announcer was now speaking again, and he listened, to try and get some information as to the whereabouts of this, 'fiancee'. When he found him, he would crush him with his bare hands! He could just imagine what he would do, but his thoughts were cut short, when the announcer said, " Ms. Tachikawa's fiancee who, up until a few days before she died, was being held on attempted murder and assault, was released on bail and since she died, he has vanished from sight. His whereabouts are unknown. The police have been searching for him, but so far, have not found any trace. His name is Frank Wirani, and he is, at this time—"

His mind trailed off, lost in thought, his heart, buried under pure anger and rage.

\_Frank— his mind seethed. \_ Who would've thought?! She was going to marry my friend and he killed her!? I should've known that something like this would've happened! I never trusted him and I never should've let my guard down! Now she's gone and it's all his fault!\_\_

—

\_ It is my fault too, he realized. \_ It is my fault. If I hadn't treated her in the awful way that I did, she never would've agreed to marry him and she would still be here today! If she knew I did love her, she would still be here today! It's all my fault!\_\_

—

\_ He felt himself sink into depression again, but this time, there was no one to help him get out of it. No one \_could get him out of

it. No one except her, but she was gone and it was all his fault!\_\_

—

\_You can still help! a familiar voice whispered. He gasped, that voice \_was familiar! It was the same one from the DigiWorld! The one who told him that he must protect the Princess.\_\_

—

\_ I can? He asked the voice.\_

—

\_ Yes, it replied, \_ but you must keep going in more ways than one! I can tell you no more. You must find out the rest for yourself! The voice trailed off into nothingness.\_\_

—

\_ Wait! His mind called out. \_ I don't understand! But it was too late, the voice was gone and he knew it probably wasn't going to come back.\_\_

—

He sat forward and rested his arms on the steering wheel, deep in thought.

\_ What does it mean, keep going in more ways than one? What could it mean? It might mean, just keep driving and see where I end up, that's a possibility, but then again, maybe it means move on with my life, I don't know. He mulled over this information, contemplating the various meanings of the phrase, when a voice broke his thoughts. This voice, was human, and it, answered his question.\_

—

" Are you all right, son?" asked a gruff voice.

He looked out the open window and found that a police officer, a traffic cop, was standing by his car..

" Um, yes sir, I'm fine, I was just thinking."

" Sure you were," said the cop, " well, you'd better finish thinking and get a move on. You can't stay here. Keep on going."

A smile broke out on his face when the cop said that. He resisted the urge to shout joyously and turned to the now puzzled cop and said ecstatically, " Thank you so much! You just solved my problem!"

With that, he turned the key in the ignition and drove off, leaving behind a very puzzled cop.

" Weird kid," the cop muttered as he stared off into the distance and watched the car vanish over the horizon.

\*\*\*

He kept his eyes glued to the road in front of him as he drove, but his mind wandered great distances. \_ How strange that that cop came up and just gave me the answer like that! It was so weird! He just told me to move on and that was the simple answer I was looking for! How strange!\_

—

\_ Some of the joy had vanished from his heart, along with some sorrow, but the anger was still there. He was extremely angry at Frank, but he was probably more angry with himself for not telling the truth when he had the chance. He narrowed his eyes as he stared off into the distance. He was a fool for believing that lying to her would be the best thing. Ha! Look where it had gotten her. She was dead now, and the long term cause was because he lied. It was all because of that one lie! Now, on the other hand, if he hadn't lied, she might still be alive. She still would've moved and all that, but she would never have agreed to marry Frank and she would more than likely be alive today! \_

—

He blinked away a tear that threatened to fall and stared ahead at the road. \_If only she was still alive! If only he could tell her the truth!\_

—

He was indeed aware that he hadn't turned off the radio, but something unknown jerked him out of his thoughts. He heard the soft beginning of what he would expect to be a sad song, and he was right. it was sad because of the way it applied to him. This is what he heard:

##### How will I start

Tomorrow without you here

Whose heart will guide me

When all the answers disappear?

Is it too late?

Are you too far gone to stay

Best friends forever

Should never have to go away

What will I do?

You know I'm only half without you

How will I make it through?

If only tears could bring you back to me

##### If only love could find a way

What I would do, what I would give if you  
Returned to me some day, some how, some way  
If my tears could bring you back to me  
I've cried you an ocean  
If you'd say I'm home again  
Waves of emotion  
Will carry you and all they can  
Just let love guide you  
And your heart will chart the course  
Soon you'll be drifting  
Into the arms of your true north  
Look in my eyes  
You'll see a million tears have gone by  
And still they're not dry  
If only tears could bring you back to me  
If only love could find a way  
What I would do, what I would give if you  
Returned to me some day, some how, some way  
If my tears could bring you back to me  
I'd hold you close  
And shout the words I only wished for before  
For one more chance, for one last dance  
There's another thing that I would love more than all.  
If only tears could bring you back to me  
If only love could find a way  
What I would do what I would give if you  
Returned to me some day, some how, some way  
If my tears could bring you back to me

--

-

By the time the song was over, he realized that he again had tears in his eyes, but this time, he made no effort to try and hide them. There was no reason to, and also, he felt that if he did, he would just go insane. He knew it wasn't good to hide his emotions and he wasn't going to try.

As the salty tears coursed down his face, he thought of how often this was all he wanted to do. All he wanted to do was cry, and now, that's exactly what he was doing. The tears felt strange and alien to him, but at the same time, he felt worlds better, but he still felt awful. When he cried, he not only cried for himself, but for her death, her family, the rest of the Digidestined, and for everyone who knew her. He also cried for everything that he had wanted to cry for before but never did. Now it was all coming out and he was glad it was. He wanted to pull over again, but he remembered what the voice had said. \_ Keep goingâ€|\_

—

He did keep driving.

\*\*\*

A few hours later, he pulled off the Turnpike and headed in to a small city just south of Orlando. As he drove through the deserted city streets, he knew that the city had indeed seen better days, just like him. It looked like it had once been a major area, but now was all but deserted. Still, he was glad for the sense of peace he was getting. He knew people here and he knew it was a good area.

It didn't take him long to find the apartment building where he had rented the apartment. When he did, he parked his car and walked into the building which he knew had once been a fancy hotel. With him, he carried a large suitcase with some belongings in it. The rest were in his car. (A/N: Sometime between the time he left his fiancée's apartment and the time he got to that really long traffic light, he stopped by his apartment and got his stuff since he knew he'd be leaving. K?)

He walked up to a small reception desk and found a woman of about fifty behind it. She was reading a thick novel by the title of Love: Lost and Found. He thought that was strange, but he dismissed it and rang a small bell.

"Excuse me," he said, almost leaning over the desk. " I need to rent an apartment."

" Sorry," said the woman without looking up. " I only have one apartment left and it's taken."

" There must be some misunderstanding," he said, " I called in andâ€|"

She looked up at him, realization dawning on her face. " Oh!" she exclaimed, " I'm sorry! I take it that you are Yamato Ishida?"

He nodded.

" Oh!" she exclaimed again, " here's your keys." She handed him the

last set of keys that hung on the rack.

" Here," he said holding out some money, " here's the payment for the apartment. I'll only be staying one night, so I'll pay now."

"No," she said pushing his hand away, "pay me when you turn the key in, all right?"

" Sure," he said as he put the money away. " What's my apartment number?"

" 435," she said. " You take the stairs," she pointed to a set of double doors, " you take them up to the fourth floor, then at the landing, turn left and head all the way down the corridor, your apartment is the one on the right."

" Thank you," he said as he turned and walked back out to his car to get his other bag. He did so and re entered the building. On his way to the stairs, he passed the woman again and he called out, " I'm sorry, but I didn't get your name."

" Oh," she smiled, " my name's Laura, Laura Richen."

\*\*\*

## In the All Night Diner

Mimi sighed as she fell back into a booth. " I'm glad the crowd's gone," she called out to Suzie.

" Yeah," Suzie replied, " me too."

" Me too," said Rachel as she too sat down.

Rachel turned to Hilary, " What about you," she asked.

" It really doesn't matter to me," Hilary replied stoically. Mimi, Suzie and Rachel sweatdropped at that.

" Hilary!" Suzie scolded, " doesn't any thing matter to you?"

" No," Hilary replied evenly.

Suzie fumed at that simple reply and asked angrily, " Why?!"

" Because it doesn't," came the reply.

" Why you?" Suzie fumed. " Show some emotion for heaven's sake!"

Mimi watched them and remembered how a similar argument had played out earlier. Rachel had to come and stop them before they tore each other to shreds, but right now, both she and Rachel were too tired to intervene and Mimi hoped that this argument would die down soon.

She smiled to herself and thought, \_Geez, I only met them a few hours ago, but they're already like my best friends! How strange!\_



" Hey," she called interrupting Suzie and Hilary, " how about some music? It might help us relax."

" That's a great idea, Lin!" Suzie replied ecstatically as she turned on a radio.

Music flooded into the room and they lost themselves in it. The music, had a calming influence on them and even Hilary seemed to be enjoying herself, although she wouldn't show it. For a while, they just sat and thought, day dreamed and such. The music was interrupted only once for the current time and announcements of what songs were coming up next.

Mimi made note that the time was now 10:00 PM. By the time she realized it, the music had started again and she set off to relax, but something stopped her. She found that the song that was playing, was sang of more than a simple daydream, but rather, a true, sincere wish. This is what she heard:

Waking up alone

In a room that still reminds me

My heart has got to learn to forget

Starting on my own

With every breath I'm getting stronger

This is not the time for regret

'Cause I don't need to hang on to

heartbreak

When there's so much of life left to live.

Love is on the way

On wings of angels

I know it's true

I fell it coming through

Love is on the way

Time is turning the pages

I don't know when

But love will find me again

I am not afraid

Of the mystery of tomorrow

I have found the faith deep within

There's a promise I have made

There's a dream I'm gonna follow  
There's another chance to begin  
And it's coming as sure as the heavens  
I can feel it right here in my heart  
Love is on the way  
On wings of angels  
I know it's true, I feel it coming through  
Love is on the way  
Time is turning the pages  
I don't know when  
But love will find me again.  
( Oh I know, I know deep down in my heart I know thatâ€¦|)  
Love is on the way  
On wings of angels  
I know it's true, I feel it coming through  
Love is on the way  
Time is turning the pages  
I don't know when  
But love will find me again  
I don't know when,  
But love will find me again.

" Lin, Linâ€¦| "

A voice broke into Mimi's thoughts and jolted her back to reality. She looked around and found herself staring into Rachel's face.

" Uhâ€¦|umâ€¦|what?" Mimi stuttered.

" Are you all right?" Rachel asked. " You like, zoned out on us or something like that. We were worried."

" Oh," Mimi said shrugging it off with a smile. "No need to. I'm as spacy as they come."

" Oh, all right," Rachel said brokenly, " but you might want to dry your eyes or people will think otherwise."

Mimi reached up and rubbed the back of her hand across her eyes and

realized that she had been crying. There was no use denying it, they all had seen it, but she was grateful that they weren't asking any questions as to why.

She looked around and met each of their eyes, finding comfort and solace in each one. They all sat, not talking, for a while, but the radio was still playing in the background.

" Oh," sighed Suzie, breaking the silence, " it must be nice to be in love. I've never been completely in love before."

" And I bet you won't be any time soon," said Rachel teasingly.

" What's that supposed to mean?!" Suzie fumed.

Mimi got up and walked over to Suzie, putting a comforting hand on her shoulder. " She didn't mean anything, Suzie."

" Oh," said Suzie. " I knew that, but I can't help but want to fall in love."

' I know," Mimi said sadly, " I know."

Suzie looked out of the window and into the distance, her face, expressionless. Mimi turned away and leaned against another counter. Suddenly, Suzie's eyes widened and her mouth dropped open.

" Speaking of love," she said, " I think I just fell in love."

" With who?" Rachel asked.

Suzie pointed out the window. " With him."

Mimi looked over her shoulder to see who she was pointing at. The person stood at the door of the diner. After a moment's hesitation, he pushed it open, causing the small bell to ring. When Mimi saw who it was, she gasped.

\*\*\*

> <b> Back inside the apartment buildingâ€¦|<o:p><o:p>\*\*\*

\*\*

After having gotten the rest of his stuff and hiking up four flights of stairs, Matt found himself in front of his temporary residence. He knew that this was indeed the apartment he had rented because it proclaimed in big brass numbers, 435.

" Well," he said, " this is it." He turned the key in the lock and swung the door open. He walked in and quickly surveyed the apartment. Satisfied with the layout, he laid his suitcase on top of the bed, and walked back outside to get his duffel bag. In the hallway, as he stood facing apartment number 436 across the hall, he had the unsettling sensation of a gust of chilly air blowing through the hallway. He towed the bag across the threshold of the door and stood staring out into the hallway. A second gust blew through, chilling him to the bone through his blue shirt. He wrapped his arms around himself in an effort to warm himself. It worked to an extent, but he could still feel the chill.

He wanted to turn and walk back into the apartment, but something was stopping him, something was holding him to the spot. He felt an uneasy feeling creep up his spine, but he was unable to turn away from the apartment number 436.

\_That was Lisa's apartment number he thought, \_ that's what it is. It's just dÃ©jÃ  vu . That's all. \_

—

Again, he tried to turn away, but again, he found he couldn't. Eyes riveted on the door, he saw a ghostly vision take form. A woman with long hair of an unknown color turned towards him and beckoned him to come forward.

He felt himself move forward unwillingly. It was as though his body was being controlled by some unknown force. It was almost like the time when he was the Knight and he saved the Soldier. A realization dawned on him. He knew that whatever he was being led towards could be something he didn't want to know, but part of him knew that he should proceed. Ignoring the part that wanted to know, he resisted with all his strength, but that was useless. He found himself being carried towards the door of apartment 436. He felt himself being carried forward and for a brief moment, was afraid that he would hit the door as physics demanded. But much to his surprise, what was about to happen, would deny the laws of physics.

He found that he passed through the seemingly solid door with the greatest of ease and he found himself in an apartment similar to the one he was in. In a small niche near the door, was a large duffel bag. He felt himself being herded past that and he was sat on the bed by a force stronger than him. The ghost woman appeared again and moved over to the duffel bag and put her hands through the material, her hands vanishing into the fabric.

\_ Hey! He thought, \_ you can't go through some one else's stuff! \_Why'd you bring me in here anyway? What if the tenant catches me in here? What're you going to do then? Hmm?\_

—

\_ Oh be quiet! Demanded the ghost as she continued rummaging through the bag. He opened his mouth to reply, when the ghost suddenly straightened up and stared at something in her hands. Curious, he craned his neck to see, but he found out when she turned and walked towards him. In her vaporous hands, she held a small wooden box, which obviously she had procured from the bag.\_

—

\_Open it, she said to him.\_

—

\_ No! I won't invade someone else's privacy! His mind screamed at the ghost. Ignoring his protests, she slowly opened the box. As the lid tilted upwards, he caught a glimpse of a small, almost circular piece of metal and a flash of green. That was enough for him. \_ Stop it! His mind screamed. \_Let me go!\_

---

\_So be it,said the ghost acquiesing her power. Before his eyes she disappated into bits and pieces of energy. In a few seconds, she was gone and he just sat on the bed, wondering what to do. \_

—

Then, before he knew it, he felt a sharp jolt and he was thrust through the door and for an incredible instant, he thought he was staring at himself. But, before he had a chance to think any further, he had the unsettling sensation of soaring back into his body and before he knew it, he found himself back in his original position, facing the other apartment.

Shaking his head dubiously, he turned and walked back into his apartment, taking care to lock the door behind him. He fell back onto his bed next to his case, and stared up at the popcorn ceiling. \_Was that a dream or was it real? He asked himself. He had the uncanny feeling that what he had just experienced was indeed real, but then again, part of him doubted it. His mind, though clouded, was focused on that box. \_ That piece of metal, it looked like aâ€|no, it couldn't be. After all, what are the odds of that happening? Probably a million to one. Maybe even more for all he knew. He laughed at the thought, but was immediately sobered by a heart wrenching thought.\_\_

—

\_ That ghost, she looked like Princess Sincerity. No, it couldn't be, but then, what if it was? Could that mean? No, she was dead and that's all there was to it. He couldn't change the past. He could only change the future. Maybe, that ghostâ€|maybe it could've been Mimi. Maybe she had come back to warn me about something, or help me find a long lost friend. Maybe, it could be. But if her ghost was here, it meant that she was more than likely dead.\_

—

The tears began to fall again and once again he didn't stop them, he just let them fall, wanting the pain to stop. He wished that he could just eliminate the pain, but he knew that he had to move on with his life. His head was spinning again. Things were moving too fast for his taste, and he didn't like it one little bit! \_ Time for a time out! He thought. He looked over at a small clock on the dresser. It read 10:00 PM.\_\_

—

\_Oh, he thought, \_ I haven't eaten anything for hours! As if on cue, his stomach rumbled loudly. It was late, where would he get food now? Then he remembered, on his way to this building, he had spotted a 12 hour diner. He could probably get some food there. Resolute, he grabbed his keys and left the apartment.\_\_

—

\*\*\*

A few minutes later, after talking briefly with Laura, he headed out

into the dark street. Still, he wasn't worried, he knew this area relatively well, so he was confident that he'd be safe. He turned left, crossed a small street and found himself standing in front of a building that had All Night Diner written in big red letters across the glass. \_ Here we go, he thought, \_ I can probably get some food here. Even through the blinds, he could see that there were lights on inside. He stood in front of the door and pushed it open. A small bell jingled to announce his arrival and his arrival was indeed noticed. \_

—

The diner was all but empty except for four women whom he assumed worked here since they were all wearing aprons and name tags. There were three women behind a small counter. One was putting away dishes. She was tall and had black hair, and from what he could see, brown eyes. Her name tag read Hilary. The second one behind the counter had her back to him, but when he had entered, he had caught a glimpse of brown eyes. She had brownish/blackish hair. He couldn't see her name tag. The third one behind the counter had short brown hair and green eyes and she wore a name tag that read Suzie. She was pointing to him as he walked in. The last woman was sitting in a booth, her head turned in his direction. She had brown eyes and brown hair. Her name tag read Rachel.

Three of the four women were staring at him, and that made him a little more than uncomfortable.

" Um," he began nervously, " is the diner open?"

" Sure thing," said the one whose name tag read Suzie, " it isn't called the All Night Diner for nothing."

" Yeah," said the one whose name tag read Rachel as she stood up, " come on in and have a seat. We'll serve you in a minute." She gestured to an empty booth and he walked over and sat down and waited. Rachel picked up a menu from off of a nearby table and handed it to him. " Here's what we have, take your pick." With that she walked away to the other three women behind the counter.

He looked back at them. Rachel had told the one, whose name he didn't know, something and she shook her head and said something to the one whose tag read Hilary who shook her head in return and pointed back at the stranger. Suzie volunteered, but Rachel shook her head and said something to no-name and after a long period of silence, no-name nodded and walked over.

\*\*\*

From the minute he walked in, Mimi knew what was coming and she didn't want to do it. It was bad enough seeing him again, but it would be worse if she had to talk to him. So, from the moment he had entered, she kept her back towards him and tried her hardest to be invisible. But now, Rachel was coming over to her and she knew what was coming.

" Well, Lin," said Rachel, " you should wait the tables. I'm the manager, you're the waitress. Why don't you go andâ€¦"

" No," Mimi said shaking her head, " I can't, Iâ€¦I know him. I don't

want to talk to him." She turned to Hilary. " Hilary?"

" Sorry, Lin," said Hilary, " I'm the cook, you're the waitress." She pointed at Mimi. " You do it."

" I'll do it," chirped Suzie, " I'd love to talk to such a hunk!"

" No, Suzie," said Rachel as she shook her head. " I suggest that Lin does her own job. After all, Suzie, you're the cashier."

Mimi stood in silence, knowing that all three were staring at her, and to make it worse, she saw that he was looking over too, but he didn't seem to recognize her, thankfully. She looked from face to face to face and found that they were all saying the exact same thing, she said half-heartedly, " All right."

" Well then," said Rachel giving her a playful slap on the back. " Go knock your friend dead!" With that, Rachel walked away and Mimi walked over to confront her long lost 'friend'.

\*\*\*

Her name tag read Lin, he could see it clearly now. No-name was named Lin. As she walked over, she pulled a small spiral notebook and a pen from her apron pocket and with them in hand, she walked over to his table.

" What'll it be, sir?" she asked, her voice full of fake cheerfulness. Inside, she loathed having to do this, having to talk to him politely after what he did to her. A small thought cheered her though, she had hopefully made his wish come true. She hoped he was suffering just like she suffered when he had shot her down like that. He had crushed her and now she hoped that her 'death' did the same to him. She smiled to herself, and was so caught up in her own thoughts, she didn't realize that he was giving his order.

" Uh, what was that again sir?" she asked, embarrassed.

" I'll have a hamburger and fries with a soda," he answered.

" Anything else?" she asked.

" No thank you," he replied before handing her back the menu.

\*\*\*

## A little while later

" Here you go," Mimi announced cheerfully as she handed him his food.

" Thanks," he replied as he bit into his hamburger, hungrily. She turned to walk away, but he called her back.

" What's wrong with the food?" she asked emotionlessly.

" Oh, nothing," he replied. " It's just, that why don't you, why don't you" his voice trailed off.

" Sit down?" she offered. " Why yes," she said, her voice holding a hint of sarcasm. " I would \_love to." She sat down opposite him, trying to hide her dislike of this situation behind a happy smile. As much as she hated the thought, she would have to make small talk with him. But before she said a word, she cast a quick glance over to Suzie, who was at the register and was blushing fiercely. She turned back to face him.\_

—

" Well," she asked, " what's your name?"

" Matt," he said simply.

\_Already knew that one, she thought. " Where are you from?" she asked.\_

—

He seemed to consider that one a moment, before saying, " Japan."

She pretended to act surprised and asked, " Well then, what brings you to America?"

" I really don't know," he replied, " many things I guess. I just came here and didn't go back."

" Oh," she replied. " Then, why did you come to this part of town?" she pried. " You look like you could afford better. So, why are you here?"

He gave her a sad look and immediately caught the well known cue and shut up.

" I just got some sad news," he said softly. " I was on the Turnpike, heading north and I caught an announcement over the radio. I was too distraught to continue driving, so I came here and I'm staying at the apartment building down the street.

\_ Oh, just peachy! She thought, \_ not only did we have to meet here, he's staying in the same building I am. Just great.\_\_

—

She pretended to give him an, 'I'm sorry that whatever happened did happen,' look before asking. " Well, what happened?"

He paused and looked away for a long second. " I just found out that the woman I loved was killed by a good friend of mine a week ago. I just feel so bad, she died a week ago and I didn't even know it!" He pounded the table with his fist. " I just keep thinking that maybe, just maybe, there was something I could've done. Maybe if I had been there, I could've saved her or something like that! There are so many maybe's and what if's!"

She let him silently mourn for a minute before putting a comfortig hand on his shoulder and saying, " Maybe it was the best thing for her," she said with a little too much confidence. He gave her a puzzled look and she looked away so as not to meet the pair of azure



eyes. The two sat in silence for a while, before she broke the silence again.

" Geez, it sounds like you loved her very much. What was her name?" she asked, afraid of what his answer might be.

He looked away again, and she could tell that his heart was breaking as he said softly, " Her name was, Mimi Tachikawa."

She gasped softly and involuntarily at that. Her head was spinning with this new information, and she looked out a nearby window at the quiet street. He loved her! It seemed like he truly did, and for a brief moment, she was wondering if she should tell him who she really was, but one line got all thoughts of a positive relationship with him out of her mind. \_Anyway, truthfully, I would have cared less if you had died todayâ€|\_

—

Remembering what he had said, the words out of his own mouth, immediately sobered her and she turned back to face him, her heart filled with anger and despair. \_ Why? She thought, \_ why me?\_\_

—

He turned back to face her and for a brief moment, their eyes met, and beneath the seemingly calm, but still hurt exterior, she caught a glimpse of the true hurt and pain that laid deep inside his soul, but that still wasn't enough for her to forgive him. What he had done was unforgivable, \_wasn't it?\_

—

" Hey," he said changing the subject, " could you pass me some ketchup?"

" Oh, sure," she said as she got up to go get a bottle from a nearby table. She walked over to the table where there were two unmarked, almost identical bottles sitting. \_ Hmm, what are two ketchup bottles doing here? Then she remembered, a gentleman had wanted some hot sauce earlier. That's what the second bottle was. Without another thought, she reached for the one she knew was the ketchup bottle, but she hesitated when a thought entered her mind. \_ He hates hot sauce! She smiled to herself and reached over and picked up the hot sauce bottle and handed it to him before sitting across from him again.\_\_

—

" Thanks," he said as he took the bottle from her and put a little on his fries.

He picked one up and bit into it as she watched, barely able to contain her laughter. For a moment, there was no reaction from him, but sure enough, moments later, his face began to contort into an expression of true dissatisfaction and he swallowed the fry almost unwillingly. His face turned red and he reached for his soda and downed the entire glass in one gulp. He looked back at her for an explanation.

" Oh, my mistake," she said snidely, " I guess I handed you the hot sauce bottle instead."

\_No kidding, he thought glaring at her.\_

—

" You know," she said, " come to think of it, I've been mixing up those two bottles all day. After all, it is my first day on the job." From across the table, he sent her an, 'I think you do know what you did' glare and she countered it with a smirk before getting up and walking away, coming back only long enough to bring him another soda.

Mimi walked over to Suzie who was behind the counter. " What did you do to him?" she asked curiously.

" Oh, nothing," Mimi lied, " just getting a little bit of revenge."

\*\*\*

## About half an hour laterâ€|

"Here's the payment," he said as he handed Suzie the money he owed.

" Thank you, sir," she said politely as she took the money from him and handed him his change. " Please do come again."

" Oh, I'm only in town for tonight," he said.

" Then come in for breakfast," she persisted.

" Oh, all right," he acquiesced. He looked at his watch. It read 11:05.

" I'd better get going," he said, " it's getting late."

" Yeah," said Rachel looking at the time. " Our shift ends in about an hour." She turned to Mimi. " Lin, why don't you go home. We can cover for you for the hour."

" Yeah," said Hilary, speaking for the first time in ages, " think of it as a little first-day-on-the-job gift. You get to go home on hour early and it doesn't get taken out of your pay."

" Go ahead," said Suzie approvingly.

" I'll walk you home, Ms. Lin," Matt said. " After all, no one should be alone outside after dark. It is a nice neighborhood and all, but no one should take any chances."

She grimaced at that. He was right, but inwardly, she was protesting with all her strength. After an interminable time, she agreed and removed her apron and hung it on a hook before grabbing her purse and walking out to meet him.

" Bye Lin!" Suzie called as they walked out the door.

When they were gone, Rachel fell back in to a chair and sighed, " Well, one night down, one more to go."

" Yes," said Hilary.

Suzie just sighed.

" Well," said Rachel, " we've got an hour with nothing to do, but let's just relax, okay?"

" Sure thing boss," said Hilary and Suzie unanimously. Rachel reached into her apron and procured an small round object, which appeared to be a stone. She held the green rock in her hand for a moment before dropping it back into the apron pocket. She noticed that the other two did the same too, except Hilary had a dark, maroon colored rock and Suzie had a pink one.

Rachel looked over at them and all three said in unison, " Phase one, complete."

\*\*\*

## Outside the dinerâ€¦|

She was more than uncomfortable with his walking her home when she lived only across a small street, but she wouldn't let it show. Inwardly, she worried if he suspected who she was, because if Izzy who hadn't seen her in oh-so-many years could recognize her immediately, she would think that he would be able to see through this disguise, but it didn't appear so. She let out a soft sigh and hoped that her secret would stay that way. A secret.

\*\*\*

He heard her sigh softly and resisted the urge to ask what was wrong. After all, he had no business meddling in the affairs of a complete stranger, or was she? Inwardly, he had this uncanny feeling that they had met before, but he couldn't figure out where. Maybe there was a clue in the way she had acted. The part about the hot sauce stuck in his mind because only about 5 or 6 people knew that he hated hot sauce, but then again, maybe it just had been an honest mistake, and he was making a mountain out of a mole hill.

Still, something didn't sit right. He just hoped it wasn't something bad.

Up until the time they got to the front of the apartment building, they had walked the short distance in silence, but now, Mimi spoke.

" I live in here," she said simply.

" I do to," he said.

"Wow, what a coincidence," she said unenthusiastically.

" What floor do you live on?" he asked.

" The 4th."

" Me too."

" Come on," she said impatiently, " I need to get some rest. You can stand out here chit-chatting all night if you want, but I'm leaving."

" No, " he said, " I'll walk you up since I have to go up anyway."

\*\*\*

## Four flights of stairs laterâ€¦|

Much to his surprise and amazement, Matt found out that not only did they live in the same building, on the same floor, he also found the they lived in the part of the fourth floor and that she took almost the exact same path that he took to his apartment.

\_How weird, he thought.\_

—

\_ Just great, she thought, \_he lives almost exactly where I do. Just my luck. Knowing my rotten luck, he probably lives across the hall from me too.\_\_

—

They walked to the end of the hall and stood in front of their respective apartments. Curious, he looked over his shoulder to see which apartment she was going into. He stood at his door, key in hand, but didn't unlock the door. She was going into apartment 436! The same apartment where he had seen the ghost! He wanted to stop her, but instead, he just stood and waited, pretending to be searching for his keys. He knew what she would find. She walked in, leaving her door open and sure enough, her voice drifted out into the hall. " Excuse me, sir," she called, " could you answer a question for me?"

" Sure," he called as he walked in. He saw her standing and pointing at the same box the ghost had shown him. It was open on the floor, some of the contents spilling out, but some were still hidden. He didn't see the ones the spirit had shown him out in the open.

" Did you happen to see anyone enter the apartment through that door?" she asked,

\_ Yeah, he thought, \_ some ghost brought me in. But he answered, " No, no one."\_\_

—

"Oh thanks," she answered as she bent down to pick out the box contents. " I guess I must've left it outside when I came in."

\*\*\*

" Oh thanks, I must've left it outside when I came in," she lied

knowing full well that she hadn't unpacked anything. " That's all I wanted to ask you," she said when he didn't leave immediately. He didn't move, but she went about picking up her jewelry, taking special care to conceal the crest and digivice. When she had picked up all her jewelry, she set the box on her dresser and said to him, " Well, if you aren't going to leave, then you might as well sit down." She gestured to the empty chair by the window.

" Okay then," he said as he sat down. He watched as she walked over to the table where he was sitting and sat on the other chair, holding the small box on her lap.

" So," he said, breaking the uncomfortable silence, " what's with the box?"

"Oh, nothing," she said as she ran her fingers over the wooden lid, " it's just my jewelry, that's all. I have some pieces with a lot of sentimental value that I don't want getting lost or stolen. That's all."

"Oh," he said, falling into silence again. He thought about this stranger for a moment. He had just met her a short while ago, but here he was talking to her like she was a childhood friend. Something still didn't sit right with him. She seemedâ€¦familiar in a strange way. Something about herâ€¦. Maybe it was her hairstyle, it did look a lot like Mimi's, maybe that's what made him trust her, but then again, he could just be seeing things, seeing as how, Mimi had been dead for the past week.

Yeah, he thought, \_ that's all it is. I'm just seeing things. That's all. That's all. Still thought, he had the nagging feeling that they had met before. Perhaps the secret to her identity lay in the box that the ghost had shown him. Maybe if he had been receptive to what the ghost had to say, maybe he would've found out who she really was. He knew that he couldn't go back and change the past. He hadn't paid attention then, but he needed to know now. He knew the key to solving this mystery lay in that small wooden jewelry box that she was protecting. He knew he had to get it. \_

—

In the next few minutes, he came up with a plan. It was a simple one, but he prayed that it would work. " Um, I really don't know, but do you have any water to drink. I can still taste the hot sauce in my mouth."

" Oh, sure," she said, coloring slightly. She got up and set the box down on the chair she had been sitting on and walked over to the small kitchen area.

Okay, he thought, \_ I'd better get the box now while her back is turned. It's now or never, I guess.\_\_

—

He decided not to make things too complicated, lest they take up time,so, he just got up, pretending to look about, and walked over to the chair where she was sitting. He simply picked up the box, opened it, and was amazed at what he saw.

\*\*\*

\_Okay, she thought, \_he just wants some water. That's a simple enough request After all, I really do feel bad about the hot sauce. She got up and walked over to a small cupboard and sure enough, she found some small plastic cups. She took one out of the cupboard, and after rinsing it out, filled it with water from the faucet. She turned around to go back and hand him the water, when she saw that he had the jewellery box.\_\_

—

\_Oh no! she thought, \_ now he'll know! No! For a brief instant, she felt her body go limp and her mind was aware that she had let go of the cup and that it was now falling to the floor, but she felt as though she couldn't move. As if in slow motion, she saw the cup falling, tumbling end over end, the water droplets flying in any multitude of directions, and finally hitting the floor with a soft, empty sounding crash that sent whatever water remaining in the glass splattering to the floor. Then, with an almost terrifying instant, she felt herself falling backwards, but it was only a sensation, nothing more. A few seconds later, she was aware that she was standing upright.\_\_

—

"No," she choked out. " No, please no!"

She saw that he had now closed the box lid and was walking over to her, azure eyes filled with even more pain and many questions. As he neared where she was standing, he reached out to place a comforting hand on her shoulder, but she jerked away and stated coldly, " I think you should leave now, Matt. Get out of my apartment and for heaven's sake! Stay out of my life!" She turned to walk away, but, still confused and wanting answers to his questions, he reached out and grabbed hold of her wrist.

" Let go of me!" she practically screamed. " Leave me alone Matt! I MEAN IT!"

" I'm afraid I can't do that," he said softly. He looked away for a short moment. " Please, I need to know."

" Know what?" she hissed.

" I need no, I want to know," he looked back towards her, fresh tears sparkling in his sapphire eyes, " please, I want to know why this faking your death? Why?"

She turned to face him, her face and eyes belying all the anger and pain that she had felt for oh so long. For a couple minutes, they stood in silence, face to face, all manners of emotions being acted out and played upon. Finally, after a long time, she said, " Fine, I'll tell you, but I don't want anyone else hearing, so go and close the door."

" Sure," he said as he walked over and pushed the door closed, taking care to lock it so that there would be no sudden interruptions.

(A/N: All right, for those of you who you think you know what's going to happen, if you think it's hentai, you're dead wrong. The day I was writing this, or any day I write for that matter, I didn't feel like writing that stuff. Just an FYI, I AM ANTI-HENTAI! All right, now that I got that out of my system, I'll get back to the story.)

She sat down on the bed and patted the space next to her, indicating for him to sit down.

" All right," he said as he sat down next to her, " please explain."

" Okay," she said as she looked away. " After I left Japan the last time, after the party, I returned to America and my modeling career. At the party, as you know, I met Frank. I mean," she turned to him and looked him directly in the eyes, " I loved you and after what you did, I didn't think I would ever love again, seeing as how much pain it caused me."

" Please..let me.." he started to say, but she cut him off and said, " Please, let me continue." He nodded and she proceeded.

" Well, a couple years later, I ran in to Frank again, and because of the way he reminded me of you, I started going out with him."

\_ How can you see anything of me in him? he thought.\_

—

" Well, everything seemed to be going well at first. We seemed to be a happy couple and everything was going great, so of course, when he asked me to marry him, I agreed and a wedding date was set. Well, soon after that, I noticed a change in him. He started showcasing me, putting me on display like a statue whenever we would go out. He was so possessive that he started getting angry if I spent too much time at my job or with my friends. At first, I tried to ignore it, trying to dismiss it as stress, but things soon escalated." Her voice took on a somber tone, and she seemed to struggle with the memories, but she continued anyway. " One day, I came home and found that my bedroom, no, the whole house for that matter, had been totally wrecked. I asked my guard who had been in here and he said that no one except for Frank had been here. Thinking that some one else had probably snuck past the guard, I dismissed the fact that he had been here and started exploring the house to see the extent of the damage. At first, I found that nothing was missing, things were just over turned and a few things broken, but when I got to my bedroom, I was in for the surprise of my life." She closed her eyes, and from her long buried memories, she pulled the memory of the trashed bedroom and described exactly what she saw.

\_When I walked in, I found that they entire room was in disarray. The bed linens had been torn off as had the curtains, I then found that the bed had been over turned and the mattress had been sliced in various places, leaving the insides showing out. The bed frame and header and footer, which were all made of wood, were broken and splintered, lying in various places all over the floor. I looked to , my left and found that my stand up armoire, which too was wooden, had been destroyed as well. The doors had been hacked at repeatedly, with an axe, I guessed, and one was hanging crookedly and the other had fallen off to the floor, revealing the torn and slashed clothes

inside. I turned around and looked at the door frame, noticing that the wood had been splintered and there were many large holes in the wall near it. Having seen enough of this, I walked into the small bathroom adjacent to my room. There I found something that horrified me. The glass shower doors had been kicked in and had shattered all over the inside of the shower stall and some had fallen into the large tub too. I looked to my right and found that the towel rings had been ripped out of the walls and were now lying on the tile floor, a few tiles of which were cracked, making it a bit difficult to walk without being cut. Nonetheless I continued forward towards a large sink and mirror at the other end of the bathroom. The mirror was cracked, from a hammer blow it looked like and the sink looked like it had been dispatched in the same way. I found no clues here, so I turned around to walk out, but a glimpse of red caught my eye. In a small niche that I used for storing various things, there was a dagger pinning a note to the wall. The dagger had a red liquid on it and at first, I was afraid it was blood, but upon closer inspection, I found it was paint. Being as careful as I could, I removed the note from its place at the wall and read it. It said, and I would remember the words for as long as I would live. Written in blood red paint was: Mimi Tachikawa, you'd better rethink your priorities, or something very hideous will befall you. I promise you that. And if you should not change, I will hunt you to the ends of the earth. You have one week before I come back. If I do not see a change in you, you will be sorry.-The Silent Stalker.\_

-

" From that moment on," she continued, " I knew that my life was in danger, so I did what I thought was best. I ran. I didn't bother to alert the police because I didn't want him to know that I knew, so I didn't say anything. I just grabbed what was salvageable, one of those things being my jewelry box and the jewelry, and I just ran. I moved out from my mansion and into a small apartment a good distance away. For a few days, I thought I was safe. The week came and gone, and the stalker showed no signs of knowing where I was, so I guess I let my guard down." She began to sob softly as she looked away.

Again, he put a comforting hand on her shoulder and this time she didn't shrug it off. He gained a little more courage from this, and slowly wrapped her in a warm embrace. Surprisingly, she welcomed it and leaned against his chest. He was somewhat surprised, but encouraged her to continue and continue she did.

" That's when he came, storming into my apartment, not caring who saw him entering. He just walked in, slamming the door behind him. He stalked up to me and pinned me against the wall. At first I was scared of what he might do. At first, I was afraid that he was going to rape me, but that fear was put aside, only to be replaced by another one. He started ranting about how I was cheating on him and he accused various people," she looked up into his eyes which were now filled with concern and caring, " one of them was even you. He said that no one cheats on him and gets away with it. That's when he started beating me and I eventually lost all my strength and lapsed into a coma. About four months after I went into the coma, I awoke, courtesy of Celeste. I persuaded the doctors and nurses to help me by saying I died, which they obviously did. Then, I went back to my apartment and grabbed my stuff. With the help of a woman named Teresa Foster, who turned out to be Celeste, I managed to escape to the airport when Frank ambushed me at the apartment building. I had no



idea how he found me, but I ran for my life while Celeste held him off. A while later, at the airport, I met up with Joe who was on the same flight here. We were lining up to board, when I noticed Frank was in the terminal and he was after me. Joe got me to the gate, but a stranger, whom I presume was working for Frank, tried to kidnap me, but Izzy managed to rescue me. Then we got on the flight and headed here. Now, once here, I find out that in about a week, he's heading here. He ambushed one of Izzy and Joe's friends and stole his ticket, which was to Florida. So, now, in a week, he's going to be here, and after me, but I refuse to run. I've run far too often and look where it's gotten me."

" Well, look at it this way," he joked, " if he hadn't chased you, you never would've met up with me again."

She gave him a look of pure disgust, and as though just realizing he was holding her, she pushed him away and stood up in front of him. " Why would I ever want to see you again after what you did to me?!" she spluttered angrily.

He looked away, hurt and ashamed before looking back up at her. He stood up and again put his hand on her shoulder. She flinched, but didn't move away. " Please," he began, " please listen to what I have to say."

" Okay," she said. " I'll listen I promise."

" What, I said back in Digiworldâ€|I trulyâ€|I sincerelyâ€|"

" Meant!" she interjected angrily.

" Hey!" he exclaimed, " you said you'd listen!"

" Sorry," she said coldly. " Continue."

" I really didn't mean that. You must believe me when I say that, back then, what I said, I said for your own good!"

" How so?" she asked emotionlessly.

He looked away, having a hard time finding the right words. " Back then, I was a loser, a jerk, but I was madly in love with you. I felt you deserved some one better than me, so I pretended to not share those feelings even though it was killing me inside. When your confession came, I really felt low and rottenâ€|"

" Don't forget like a jerk, an loser, and idiotâ€|"

" Okay! I get the point! Can I continue?"

She nodded.

" Well, anyway, when you confessed, I felt stronger than ever that you deserved some one better like Joe or Tai for example. So, I said I hated you so that you would stop loving me and love some one who was worthy of you. That's why I said it and that was the only reason." He paused again before continuing. "For the past years, ever since that day, I kept thinking about you. I tried to form relationships, but they failed everytime, leaving me heartbroken. Just today, I broke up with some one who almost became my

fianceÃ©."

" Geez," she said snidely, " you're just leaving a trail of broken hearts aren't you?"

" Yeah, well, she was cheating on me! Whaddya want me to do?"

She was silent and he calmed down enough to continue. " I thought of seeking you out, and I was going to search for you, when I got the horrible news that you were dead. After that, I didn't know what to do, but I soon found out that I must continue driving, so here I am, with you."

For a long time, both were silent, both staring at nothing in particular. Sometimes they stared away from each other, sometimes at each other, but they couldn't find any words to describe what they were feeling. Eventually, she broke down and wrapped him in a hug which he returned gratefully.

"Oh, Matt, she sighed as she began to cry tears of joy mixed with tears of agony. " I'm so so sorry for what I did to you."

" I'm sorry too, Mimi," he said solemnly.

" Can you ever forgive me?" they asked in unison.

"Yes," they replied in unison as they embraced again. She looked up into his eyes and said from the bottom of her heart, " I truly do love you. I never stopped and I never will."

" I never could stop loving you, and I never would," he replied."

No more words were needed as their lips met in a passionate, but soft kiss.

\*\*\*

## A few days laterâ€|

" Oh you mean it!?" Mimi squealed delightedly.

" Of course," he said as he handed her a plane ticket. " We're going back to Japan to meet with the others. From what you said, by this time, Izzy and Joe are probably back there, and you'll be out of town a few days before Frank arrives."

" Oh thank you!" she said excitedly as she hugged him for the millionth time since he had told her.

" Come on," he said as he extended his hand. " The plane leaves in two hours. We've got to get going. We'll go by the apartments and pick up our stuff before time runs out. All right?"

" Sure," she said.

"Excuse me, Miss," said a janitor as he swept up the floor of the airport terminal they were standing in.

" Oh, sure," she replied as she stepped out of his way, thinking nothing of it.

" Come on, Lin," he said, remembering her code name. " We've got to get going, or we're not going to have enough time."

She took his hand and they walked out of the terminal together.

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From over his shoulder, the janitor watched as they walked away and a smile of sinister satisfaction crossed his face. His boss would be pleased and he would get rewarded for the good information. That girl was so easy to track. His boss said she'd be difficult to track, but he'd had harder before and this was nothing to him. Setting aside his broom, he walked over to a row of nearby pay phones and made a collect call. A male voice on the other end accepted the call and said, " Yes, what info have you got for me?"

" They're on their way to Japan," said the janitor.

" When?" asked the voice.

" Today, in two hours," he replied.

" Good," said the voice. " Oh, and thank you very much Steve. I should reward you. Do you remember the package that I gave you when we first met?"

" Sure boss," said Steve.

" Open it and in it you will find your reward." With that, the man hung up.

Steve reached in to his pocket and found a small box that his boss had given him. Curious as to what his reward was, he opened it and found a gold and diamond Rolex in the box.

\_Wow! He thought, \_ the boss really outdid himself! He removed the watch from the box and secured it around his wrist. At first, everything seemed normal, but the second he closed the clasp that held the watch in place, he felt a sharp burning, stinging sensation in his wrist. Curious as to what it might be, he removed the watch, only to find a small, almost invisible wound in his wrist. Since it was nothing serious, he thought little of it, but by the time he began to suspect, it was too late. A few seconds later, the world around him grew fuzzy and he felt himself grow dizzy. Unable to keep his balance, he collapsed to the floor writhing in agony.\_\_

—

\_Crap, he thought, \_ that rat poisoned me! Before he could think any further, he was dead.\_\_

—

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## Two Hours later, at the terminalâ€¦|

" Lin," he soothed, " there's no need to be worried. He's nowhere near here."

" That's what I thought last time," Mimi said as she continued scanning the airport for any sign of Frank.

" Well, this is not last time," he said. " Besides, if anyone tries to kidnap you, I'll protect you. I promise," he said as he gently pushed aside her hair from her eyes. She gave him an adoring look before looking around again.

Trying to get her mind off of that subject, he asked, " So, what was with the hot sauce?"

" What?" she asked somewhat confused.

" You know, the hot sauce back at the restaurant. Why'd you do that? You knew I hated hot sauce."

" That was the point," she said. " I knew you hated hot sauce, and since I was angry at you. I gave you hot sauce instead of ketchup. That's all. Why? Haven't you forgiven me?"

" Yes, I did, I was justâ€|curious, that's all." With that, he settled back into silence, leaving her to look around the terminal to her heart's content.

A few minutes later, boarding began, and they walked up to the gate together. This time, even though they were at the back of the line, the few minutes they were in the line, was living torture for her. She felt even more nervous because of what happened last time, so he drew her closer, and it comforted her somewhat, but she was still nervous. The line moved swiftly and soon they were one the plane, no problems. They had been lucky enough to get seats together, and they were both grateful for that. She felt safer with him around and he was able to keep a close eye on her. Memories of the hurried hours prior were packed away, gone from conscious thought as Mimi slipped into a deep sleep.

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(A/N: All right, this part was supposed to be longer, but I decided to cut it into 2 pieces, so now Every Roseâ€|.is going to be four parts instead of three. Just thought I'd let you know.-Celestial Angel)

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## 7. Episode 3 Part One: Return

> <meta name="ProgId"> Every Rose Has Its Thorns

Every Rose Has Its Thorns

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**\*\* Disclaimer: I do not own Digimon. Never have and never will. I do own Celeste, Aries and the Elder though, so don't steal them.\*\***

**\*\*Author's note:** Please Read the this note! All rightey then, this was originally supposed to be the end to part , so this probably isn't going to be as long as the other two parts. ( Hurray!) After this, there is one more part. Sorry this took so long (and even with all that, this part sucks), I had a little bit of indescision( not to mention writer's block). But now that that's over, I've got something to tell you all, this isn't going to be my last fanfic, but the ones I do after summer's over will take very long to get out, but I will keep writing. Also, there is going to be a sequel to this story, but only if you guys want it, ok? So lemme know what you think. All right? Well, I'll let you know in the final part. Also I've included a part of my own original book in here. It's the fight scene, you'll know it when you see it. Please don't steal it. K? Now to the story!\*\*

[illegible]

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# Part Three: Return
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[illegible]

\*\* The lights of the Tokyo airport, from high above in the sky, seemed to be now more than tiny jewels sparkling against the carpet of the earth like miniature jewels and coupled with the stars above made it a beautiful sight to behold indeed.\*\*

But Mimi had seen enough of such things, that the all too familiar sight of an airport landing strip made her sick to her stomach, so, she turned away from the window, towards the interior of the airplane. The airplane hummed gently around her giving no one silence, but still, many on the plane were asleep. For some reason though, she couldn't sleep. She just felt as though her body had grown past the need for such things, but she guessed that it was due to the fact that she was still riding on a surge of adrenaline from the hour beforeâ€”

\* \* \*

## Flashbackâ€|

Once again, like the time she had escaped from New York just a day prior, she hurriedly stuffed her belongings into the familiar black duffel bag, but this time, the reason was somewhat different. The reason she was hurrying was so that she wouldn't miss the flight that Matt had so thoughtfully planned for her. She couldn't afford to miss this flight. She was glad to be escaping Florida, leaving it far behind, returning to her childhood home. It would be nice. But, what would be nice, would be escaping Frank, leaving him, for the time being, clueless as to where she had gone, and that meant that she could have some peace and quiet if everything went as planned.

She took a quick look around the small apartment the she hadn't even stayed in one day yet, to make sure that she wasn't leaving anything behind. She thought for a minute about what she had unpacked if anything, and nothing came to her mind except the jewelry box which she had put away already. She had checked the bag to make sure nothing was missing, and had found that everything was still there.

She had her back to the open door, and for a brief moment, thought she had felt a chill, as though someone had entered the room.

"Who's there?" she asked, half-expecting to hear Matt's voice answer, but when no answer came, she became afraid.

" Who's there?" she asked again, hoping for a friendly answer. Nothing but silence. She still had her back to the door, but was afraid to turn around and see who it was, lest it be Frank. Trembling, inwardly as well as outwardly, she tried to convince herself that she was just hearing things. After a few terrifying moments, she managed to gather enough courage to turn around and face whoever it was. Ever so slowly, she turned her head, only to findâ€|that there was no one there. Puzzled, she turned around fully and found that the room was indeed empty. Wondering if Matt was trying to play a trick on her, she walked to the door and peeked in to his apartment. He was in there, packing, looking too busy to have tried a trick like that, so she went back in to her apartment. She closed the bag, and sat down to relax for a few minutes, closing her eyes to try and drift off in to a peaceful sleep, confident that Matt would keep an eye out for her while she slept, only to be confronted by the phantom breeze again.

Even though it was a excruciatingly hot day, the slight breeze chilled her to the bone. It felt as though her blood was freezing in her veins; not pleasant in the slightest. Feeling deeply disturbed, she sat up and looked around the room. It was empty, there was nowhere to hide. If anybody was here, she should be able to see them. Nonetheless, she saw no one, but felt the distinct presence of another human.

\_There's nowhere for them to hide, she thought, \_ there's no one here. She paused. \_Then why do I feel like I'm being watched? She thought for a few seconds before remembering. The bathroom! They must be hiding in the bathroom. She got up from her bed, slowly and uncertainly, and cautiously made her way over to the bathroom. She stood in front of the door, not certain if she wanted to go in, scared that it might be Frank. She reached out a shaking hand to turn

the knob, but drew it back protectively as the knob turned itself and the door swung open, revealing an empty bathroom. She was somewhat astounded at this, but feeling as though she was making a very unwise descision, ventured in to the room, only to have to door slam shut behind her, mysteriously locking itself in the process.\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_

She drew in a fearful breath as thoughts of who might be behind this and what they might do, raced through her mind. It could be Frank, or one of his allies who was going to try to pump a deadly mixture into the room, causing her respiratory system to fail. Or worse yet, maybe who ever it was was already in here, hiding in the shower stall, waiting for the right moment to strike

\_Don't think that!!! She mentally yelled at herself. \_ It's just a coincidence, that's all. You'd probably be able to get out of here if you have to. She went over to the door to try the knob, and sure enough, it turned easily in her hand. Letting out a pent up breath, she turned the knob and gave the door a gentle push, getting ready to grab her stuff and run, when unexpectedly, she heard a loud thud behind her like a body falling to the floor. Again, she had that feeling of time standing still, and ever so excruciatingly slowly , turned her head to see who it was, if it was anyone at all.\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_

She gasped, shocked when she saw a crumpled body in the middle of the floor. The shower stall was undisturbed, so she knew it hadn't been hiding there before. At first, she didn't recognize who it was, but she gathered her courage and ventured closer. As she inched towards the body, she was shocked to know, that even with the body being in a paper-doll state, she recognized this person. When she reached the body, seeing as it was so still, she immediately checked for a pulse, and was relieved when she found one. It seemed the person was simply uncouncious, but that was not to last. The body on the floor came to life and stirred slightly. As her icy blue eyes opened, the woman seemed to be disoriented and sat up sharply. She winced in pain and gingerly rubbed her side, as she took in her surroundings and Mimi.

During the time that the woman was looking around, Mimi took a moment to survey her friend's condition. The once shiny, flowing blond hair, was now in wild disarray and coated with blood. Two different types, Mimi noticed. One was the red, unmistakable blood of a human being, and the other, she wasn't sure if it was even blood, but she took a wild guess and guessed that the slimy greenish/yellowish substance that matted her friend's hair, was blood as well, though definitely not human. The beautiful golden belt that Mimi had seen earlier, was now gone, leaving her dress hanging loosely on her withered frame. The dress itself, was no longer a dress. The shirt, had beens slashed in numerous places, leaving large slits, through which Mimi could see large, deep cuts on her friend's torso. The skirt, once down to her friend's ankles, was now, barely past her thigh in the longest of places. The once snow white dress, was covered in large spots of blood, dirt, and it looked like it was covered in some kind of powder as well, a thick heavy powder, like powdered lead, that clung in large spots to the dress and her friend's skin. Mimi, curious as to what it might be, reached out her hand to clean away a small portion

of the powder, but was stopped, when her friend yelled harshly, " No! Don't touch that!"

Mimi, reflexively drew her hand back and cradled it protectively. It took her a second to regain her wits before she managed to ask, " Celeste, what happened?"

\*\*\*

"Weâ€|we were attacked," she said slowly.

" By who?" Mimi asked.

" It is no concern of yours," she replied.

" Why not?"

" Because you are not destined to fight this war, I am."

"What war?"

" I cannot tell."

" May I ask why you are here?"

" I am here, not under orders, but of my own free will."

" Orders?"

"Do not worry about that."

" Despite my superior's wishes, I came here to deliver a message and warn you."

" Warn me about what?"

" I will tell you. You must be very careful in the next few days. You must not let your guard down, for it will be that time, when disaster will strike. You must be on guard. Do not let yourself be found alone until at least, \_at least a month or two has past. Trust me on that. You must be very careful. One slip-up, could be disastrous. Also, I must caution you. If for some reason, you do slip-up, the Digi-destined will be on their own to save you. My friends and I will not be able to help."\_

—

Mimi was shocked, "Why?" she asked, confused.

"Becauseâ€|there are two reasons. One, we are in the middle of fighting a war. A very important one at that. If we loose, not only will we be killed, the so-called, Figures of Light will be too."

" Figures of Light? Who are they?"

Celeste gave a shallow sigh and answered, " I do not have the time to go into the details of what I do, but we shall say, there are many, many Earth's other than the one you know. People might never understand the intricacies of the matter, I barely do, but in each dimension, there are important people who "hold" the fate of the



dimension in their hands, and they can be either good or evil. How that specific dimension turns out, depends, not only on the choices made, but also, on how the environment around them reacts. So, in layman's terms, they control the fate of the world they live in. On my planet, everyone has their moments, so, if they were going to destroy the Light Figuresâ€|"

"They'd have to destroy the entire planet," Mimi finished.

Celeste nodded grimly.

"Well," Mimi mused, "I'm willing to guess, that based upon what you said about the Figures, the DigiDestined are the Figures for this dimension."

"You are correct. Even though your war is finished, you are still important, for reasons I cannot divulge. Also, the second reason we cannot help, is because my superior, the Elder, issued orders that forbid us to interfere anymore in this timeline, and we must obey, or the consequences will be dire. We must obey her."

Even though she was confused, she asked, " Yet you are here. Why?"

"Because, as I said, I am risking my future freedom, to come and warn you that, whatever you do, stay in this room. Do not come out until I tell youâ€|" Celeste's eyes went wide and her jaw dropped as her gaze lifted past Mimi's shoulder. Mimi was going to turn around to see what Celeste was staring at, when, her friend reached forward and pushed her to the side.

She hit the tile floor roughly and she knew that she'd probably have a bruise or a cut on her face. She lifted her head and saw an already weak Celeste pushing herself to her feet, to face whatever it was that had been behind Mimi.

Mimi's eyes widened in shock at what she saw. What had been only inches behind her, was a large "cloud" of writhing blackness, the only break in which, were two red slits which she guessed were eyes. Two large stumps, extended from the cloud and ended in three claws each. There was a strange aura of negative energy coming from the creature, an evil, dark energy that made her shiver with fear. She had never felt something so evil in all her life, not even from Apocalymon or any of the evil digimon they had faced for that matter. This was far more evil and far more dangerous. Nonetheless, her friend faced it bravely.

Without even speaking a word, Celeste grabbed something from inside her shirt, a necklace, presumably and ripped the pendant off. In the next instant, a bright flash of light and a golden sword materialized in her hands. With a fluid motion, she swung the newly formed sword in a wide arc, catching the creature in its midsection. The sword sliced it with ease, like a warm knife through butter, effectively splitting the creature two. But that was not enough, she swung the sword in a horizontal cut, quartering the creature. She stopped as the creature began to dissolve in to a yellow smoke that smelled strongly of sulfur. Celeste looked surprised by that, but raised her free hand and a forcefield appeared around the smoke and sent the "bubble" through a portal which she opened after she encased the substance, effectively removing it.

Mimi watched, stunned at the way the creature was so easily dispatched, but when she thought about it some more, she realized that what she saw, was probably more than routine for Celeste and all her friends. Nonetheless, she was surprised, and when she finally regained her wits, she managed to stammer, "  
Wh..whatâ€|wasâ€|\_that?"\_

—

"That," Celeste breathed, " was my enemy. We're at war with them."

"Oh."

There was a silence between the two for a moment, but then, after catching her breath, Celeste said, " I bet you're wondering about the smoke. Are you?"

Mimi nodded. She \_was curious as to why her friend did that.\_

—

" You remember the dust that is clinging to my skin? The one I told you not to touch?" Mimi nodded again and Celeste continued. " Well, that sulfur smoke, when it comes in to contact with the oils on the human skin, it adheres itself and begins to eat away at the skin. It does little to me, but if you had touched it, you would have been contaminated. I'm sorry for not removing it earlier, but I came right from the battlefield, because, the battle ended sooner than expected and I'm willing to bet that the Elder doesn't know that."

" Who is the Elder?"

"My superior. The one who forbade us to help you. Here, let me help you." Celeste, who by now, had limped over to where Mimi was, extended her hand to help her up. She pulled Mimi to her feet and examined the cut on her forehead. " Oh my, this really needs to be taken care of." She waved her hand over the cut and the skin healed. Seconds later, the cut appeared on Celeste's forehead, then promptly vanished.

Mimi opened her mouth to ask what just happened, but Celeste's eyes narrowed and she immediately whispered to Mimi to keep quiet. Sword in hand again, Celeste limped over to the door and leaned against the wall. Mimi watched this all, the whole time, her mind filled with questions.

\_What is going on here? She asked herself. \_Why is Celeste so worried?\_\_

—

\_ Because, came Celeste's voice, \_if you make a sound, you'll die.\_\_

—

\*\*\*

Matt had absolutely no idea what hit him. Things were peaceful enough at first, but they all too quickly took a turn for the worse. Packing hadn't been too tedious, seeing as how he hadn't unpacked much the previous night. He was done in a matter of minutes. He'd grabbed his bags and made a quick trip to his car to store them, so he didn't have to carry two sets of bags. \_She'll be okay for a few minutes, he thought. \_Everything will be fineâ€|\_\_

—

Little did he know, but two pairs of eyes were watching him. A pair of crimson red eyes were watching him closely from the shadows of a nearby alley and a pair of dull hazel ones from a large window opposite the street. As he disappeared back into the apartment building, the owner of the hazel eyes followed him in, while the owner of the crimson eyes, stayed putâ€|for now.

When he got back up to his apartment, he realized that, for some reason, Mimi hadn't finished packing yet, even though, she had very little to pack. He also realized, that if she took any longer, the plane ticket, the \_expensive plane ticket would go to waste. He lay back on his bed and stretched relaxing his muscles and mind.\_

—

Truthfully, he hadn't expected any trouble from anyone seeing as how, Frank was still in New York. Besides, both of them had only stayed here a day, now they were moving on. Japan probably was the best option. He'd probably have a harder time finding her there. He doubted that Frank had had time to set up agents in Japan yet.

\_Wait a minute! He bolted upright. \_Crap! I forgot about that! He probably has agents all over the country! That \*\*must be how he found her so quickly the first time she ran! It must be! It has to be! That meansâ€|\*\*\_\_

—\*\*

The knot that had been in his stomach since last night tightened again, causing an intense, stabbing pain and coupled with the sudden feeling of sickness that comes with realizing a horrible fact made him want to keel over, but he managed to stay on his feet. He staggered weakly towards her open apartment door, thinking that wasn't such a good idea to begin with. But, they had only expected to be a few minutes, he never thought that this would happen. He doubted anyone did.

The bathroom door was wide open, meaning that she wasn't in there. He continued walking past the luggage alcove, where her duffel bag was still sitting, untouched. He continued towards the bedroom.

As he walked in, the knot tightened again and his stomach lurched sickeningly when he saw what was in there. In the middle of the bedroom, near the window, stood a tall man dressed entirely in black, from head to toe. The only exception was a small band across this face that allowed two filmy hazel eyes to show through. In his hand, he held something, but Matt couldn't see what it was. But he could see all too clearly what lay at his feet.

On the floor, in front of the man in black, lay a crumpled mass of flesh, which his mind identified as a womanâ€¦a dead one. There was a profuse amount of blood around the body, but the only discernable mark on the body, was a gunshot wound to the back. He could tell because of the small bloody oblongish shape staining the pink shirt that the victim wore. Brownish shoulder length hair was scattered in wild disarray around the body. In her bloodstained hand, lay a small brown pendant with a green shape in the center, a shape like a teardropâ€¦.

His mind shut down immediately, refusing to process the new information that it was being fed. He stood at the scene, dumbstruck at what he saw, but unable to react. Instead of focusing on current events, his mind turned to past events, memories and most prolific of allâ€¦guilt.

\_How could I not have seen someone enter the apartment? I mean, for heaven's sake! Both doors were wide open! She would have screamed of something! I know it! How could I not have heard?! How?! What about the gunshot?! I mean, he \*\*shot her! It would have made some kind of sound! I should have heard it! Why didn't I? How could I let this happen?! How could I?!!!\*\*\_

\_\*\*

His thoughts were shattered, when the man in black, obviously the killer, spoke mockingly, " Well, well, well, so the hero's finally arrived, I see." He looked down at the body and nudged it slightly with his foot. It gave no response at all. " A bit late though," he sneered. " Such a shame though, really was pretty, such a nice body tooâ€¦"

He didn't even let the killer finish his sentence; outraged, he lunged towards the killer, ready to attack, but was stopped when the man's foot connected with his ribs, sending him sprawling to the side, where he fell with a dull thud.

Somewhat dazed, he sat up weakly and tried to push himself to his feet, when the killer brought his concealed hand forward, and Matt found himself staring at the barrel of a gun, with a silencer attached to it.

His eyes seemed to lock themselves on the gun as a sudden need for self preservation overpowered his senses. He backed away slightly from the gun, but kept his eyes fixed on it.

" When I said you were late, Ishida, I meant you were too late to save your little friend," the man sneered as he gestured to the body at his feet, " but, you're not too late to join her." He raised the gun and released the safety.

In that moment, time seemed to stop allowing every minute detail to become visible. He could hear the pounding of the blood in his ears, the ragged, raspy sound of his own breathing, the sound of the air around him, the shuffle of cloth, a slight groan escaping his lips, a cry of "No!"â€¦

\_Wait a minute he thought\_, what's going on here? I didn't just say anything? Did I?\_\_

—  
\_ "No!" the cry came again and this time he was certain that its origin wasn't him. He looked around the room for the source of the word, and was understandably more than shocked, when the body at the assailant's feet began to stir. Both men backed away somewhat surprised.\_

—  
" What the hell is going on here?!" the man asked no one in particular. Then he turned to the body, still pushing itself up. " I thought you were dead!"

" It appears not," Matt said with a smirk. It seemed that the tides were turning in his favor.

"I'll see about that," the man said as he turned the gun away from Matt and towards the still rising body. He fired one shot at all but point blank range, that lodged itself in the body's abdomen, but the body, or person, whatever it was, was unphased. It continued rising. The man fired two more direct shots, but again, they had no effect. The tide was definitely turning.

When the body, gunshot wounds and all, was standing, it turned to face the man and said mockingly, " Nice shots," and smiled menacingly. The crest in her hand began to emit a bright light, and when the light had subsided to the point where it was tolerable to the eyes, the crest was gone, replaced by a small maroonish colored stone, and the body was gone, replaced by a healthy looking, perfectly alive woman (about 18) dressed in a red body suit that was like a second skin.

The man was so surprised at this, that, at first, he didn't know how to react, and started to back away. " Whaâ€|what's going on here?!" he demanded.

"That's for me to know and for you to find out," she said coldly, " now, hand over the gun and surrender."

The man looked at the gun, almost puzzled as to what he had it for, but something ignited in his eyes and he released the safety and pointed the gun at her again and fired once.

She dodged to the left and the bullet soared harmlessly past her head, but she barely turned back in time to see him fire another. She leaned forward and the bullet flew over her head, lodging itself in the wall behind her.

"All right," she muttered to herself, " enough of this." The stone in her hand began to glow again, but this time, when the light subsided, it revealed that she now had a sword with a large silvery blade, with a red jewel embedded in the handle.

She stood in the same spot where she had been standing since she appeared, looked up, seemed to vanish in a short flash of reddish light, before reappearing, not a foot in front of the man with the gun, and with a wide kick, sent the gun flying out of his hand, landing right in front of Matt. He lunged forward and grabbed it to make sure that the other man didn't get his hands back on it

again.

The unidentified woman, however, was taking a more drastic approach to make sure the man didn't try anything funny again. She held her sword to the tender skin of his throat, poking it mockingly to scare him. She stood there for a moment, glaring at him, while he stared down at the sword, eyes wide with fright. After about a minute, she pulled her sword away and hung it at her side.

With a toss of her head she indicated towards the door and said in a tone that left no doubt in his mind, " Now get out." The instant she had removed her sword, he started stepping away and when she told him to leave, he bolted for the door, not even casting a backwards glance at them. She stood and stared until he had vanished down the hall.

After the man was gone, the unidentified woman, turned her attention to a very surprised Matt, who, still possessing the gun ( and now standing BTW) released the safety on the gun and pointed it at her. She seemed not in the least surprised. In fact, her response surprised him.

"You might want to put that down," she said, " it's useless, it's not loaded." After quickly checking this fact, he said, " Well, then, could ya put away your sword!?"

She looked at the sword hanging from her waist, almost surprised at its being there. She asked, " Oh, you mean this thing?" She grabbed it and held it in two hands, almost as though examining it, running her finger along the long, curved blade. She contemplated the sword and his request for a minute before agreeing. She held the sword ( by its handle) in her right hand and said, " Aries Sword Recall." The jewel in the sword's handle began to glow again, and after a second enveloped the whole blade before the light shrunk back into the jewel which she pinned to her bodysuit. She held out her hand to him and said, " Now, the gun." He nodded and passed it to her and she attached it to a belt around her waist.

"Well then," she said, " let's get this over with," and started to walk away.

"Hey wait a minute!" he exclaimed, surprised at her straightforwardness. " Who said I was going anywhere with you? I don't even know who you are! And for that matter, what \_are you doing here, and where's Mimi?"\_

—

"You'll see, if you come with me," she said calmly.

"How do I know I can trust you?" he asked.

She was silent for a moment, contemplating how to answer his question. After a long while, she finally answered, " You don't," she paused, " but, I \_did save your life. Doesn't that get me \_some credit if only a little?"\_

—

He thought about that for a moment, thoughts running through his mind

like runners in an Olympic foot race. Sure, she did save him from the man, but he could have done it himself anyway. She saved him, but still, how did he know that this wasn't some sort of elaborate setup on her part to get him to trust her? He ran the previous few minutes over and over again in his mind. The packing, making a quick trip to the car to put his things away, coming back up, relaxing, deciding to check on Mimi, finding the murderer..and the corpse, staring down the barrel of the gun, the corpse standing up and becoming his rescuer, and now, the realization, that if the corpse wasn't real, where was the real Mimi?

> After all those thoughts, and many more had surfaced in his mind, he said, " All right, so it does, but don't try anything funny."<p>

"What makes you think that that was my intention in the first place?" she asked over her shoulder as she walked towards the apartment door.

"I don't know," he said as he followed her, " it's just this feeling I have." He walked up and stood next to her.

She walked up to the open bathroom door and stood there for a moment. It looked as though she were about to knock on the open door, but she hesitated and turned to face him, " You are right not to trust everyone," she said slowly, " but do not let that mistrust go too far, or it will be your ultimate undoing. You must heed my words."

"How will I know who to trust?" he asked, confused.

"You will know when the time is right, " she said, turning back towards the door.

Her hand made a hollow sound against the wooden door as she knocked lightly. " The coast is clear," she said to the empty room.

Matt watched in amazement as before his very eyes, the room began to warp and twist as though it was being wrung out like a wet rag. The room began to grow blurry and eventually, what he guessed was a façade, began to crack into minuscule pieces which then broke apart, only to dissolve the second they did. He was puzzled as to what was going on, but asked no questions, because once the façade vanished, it revealed another room, identical to the one who had been there only moments before, except for one tiny detail. It wasn't empty.

Leaning against the wall, was an unidentified woman who looked as though she had just been through a war, and sitting cross-legged in the middle of the floor, looking all the worse for wear, was a very anxious Mimi.

"Matt!" she squealed delightedly as she jumped up from where she had been sitting and ran forward to embrace him. " I never thought I'd see you again! I thought he'd kill you and then who would protect me from Frank? I don't know what I would if you weren't here! And the worst part is that Celeste and her friends won't be able to help us anymore!"

She was talking so fast now that his head was spinning. He pushed her away gently. " What was that?" he asked. He looked up at the woman in

the doorway, and the one who had saved him, " and just who are these people?"

"Well, you see—" she began. She would have continued, but the woman cut her off with a wave of her hand.

"To make her long story short," said the woman, " I am Celeste, the same one from back in the DigiWorld, and I see you've met my friend Aries."

"Yes, I have," he murmured as he let the previous few sentences sink in. When it did, he exclaimed, "Celeste! \_The Celeste! That's great!" He turned to Mimi. " We don't have to worry about anything now! We'll be able to get to Japan no problem! This is gr—" \_

—

He was cut off by Mimi's somber voice saying, " Didn't you hear what I said the first time? Celeste and her friends won't be able to help us anymore. They've already risked who knows what to come and help us this time! They can't anymore!"

"Besides," interjected Celeste, " Mimi knows what she saw, we don't want to take any more chances. One's already found its way here. We must make sure that none follow it. I apologize for not letting you know sooner."

He was dumbstruck. " You mean that—"?"

"Yes," said Aries numbly. "And there is no way we can change that."

"I'm sorry," Celeste said again.

" It's okay, Celeste," said Mimi, " you don't have to apologize. None of this is under your control. None of it at all." She turned to Matt. " We'll just have to be on our guard, right?"

He nodded, resolute that they would be fine. " C'mon," he said, " let's get your things. We're going to miss the flight if we stay any longer, and who knows what hideous delays are awaiting us at the airport."

She thought this over for a few seconds before grabbing her duffel bag and purse from the alcove. He did a double take. " Hey," he said, " what happened here? I thought that—" Oh never mind."

"What?" she asked.

"Forget it."

"Okay then. Let's go."

"Okay, here, I'll take the duffel bag. It's probably heavy."

"Thanks," she said as she handed him the bag. It \_was beginning to get a tad heavy.\_

—



"No problem," he said as they walked out the door, leaving Celeste and Aries behind. Aries, who was now standing by the door, watched as they walked down the hall and turned right at the end of the corridor and out of sight. She turned back to her ailing friend.

" Will they be all right?" she asked, afraid of the answer.

Celeste was silent for a minute or two before slowly answering, " With time. Only with time."

\*\*\*

\*\*It's a while later, and they are now just past half way to the airport.\*\*

\*\*

The silence in the car was so mind numbing, so isolating, so horrible. Neither had said a word since they had left the apartment building about 15 minutes ago. It was only about another 10 to the airport, but Mimi didn't think that she could bear another ten minutes of silence, so she broke it.

"What did I do?" she asked slowly, " why are you mad at me?"

For a minute, it seemed as though he was just going to ignore the question and keep driving. His eyes were locked ahead, never wavering from the street.

\_He is mad,she thought dimly.\_

—

Then, he turned towards her for just a second and said, his voice filled with caring, " No, I could never be mad at you." He paused and turned back towards the road before adding, " Why would you think that?"

She looked away and out the window. " Oh, it's just that, I don't know. It's just a feeling I have. You're upset about something. I can tell. I just don't know what, and I the first thought that came to my mind, was about my getting you all mixed up in this horrible ordeal. I mean what happened this morning, you could have gotten killed." Tears began to fall from her eyes. " And it would have been all my fault!" She began crying hysterically, burying her face in her hands.

He resisted the urge to take his hands off the steering wheel and just hold her, but he knew that if he did, the result wasn't going to be pretty. Instead, he did the next best thing. " About what happened this morning it wasn't your fault."

She lifted her face from her hands and turned towards him. " Really?" she asked, her eyes still brimming with tears.

He glanced towards her again before turning back towards the road. "Of course not!" he exclaimed. He took a breath and calmed down before continuing. " If anything, it was my fault. If anything, it was totally my fault." In frustration, he brought his fist down hard

upon the steering wheel rim causing Mimi to jump.

"It's my fault totally," he growled to himself.

"How?" she asked timidly, scared.

" If only I hadn't been such an idiot all those years ago and lied to you, none of this ever would have happened.. And you would never have been hurt like you were!" His mind subconsciously recalled the glaring wound that ran across her scalp like an angry red lightning bolt. The entire back of her head had been split open by the force of the blows. Even after all this time, it was still there, as plain as day. It would take a long time for the physical scars to heal. The emotional scars though, were another matter. Another matter entirely. He glanced back at her again. Her eyes were filled with tears again. For the first time since they met up again, he took the time to take a good look at her. Visibly, she hadn't changed much except for her hair was shorter than he remembered it, and was now dark brown. Emotionally, she seemed as broken as the Ten Commandments, maybe even more. ( A/N: Don't ask where I got that from. My mind is a very \_very scary placeâ€¦) She seemed to have shrunk back in to some kind of shell that she used as best she could to protect her from the outside world. Her form was withered, no longer a healthy looking form, as he remembered her, but now she seemed like a withered plant. She seemed to be recovering somewhat, but still, was nothing like her old self.\_

—

He looked back at her again and said, " I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap like that. It's justâ€¦."

"I know," she finished for him. "I knowâ€¦"

\*\*\*

\*\*Okay, back to the presentâ€¦.\*\*

\*\*

"Ahhhhh" Mimi yawned loudly and covered her mouth with her hand. She opened her eyes, blinking away the sleep that was pulling them closed, and looked around the large airport terminal. ( A/N: Okay, I don't really know what the airports are like in Japan, so I'm just going to assume they're like the ones in America and England.) She found that she was standing in front of the baggage carousel. Looking around, she also noticed that Matt was nowhere in sight. Fearing for both of their safeties, she scanned the semi-large crowd frantically for some sign of him. Finally, she spotted him gathering their bags from the carousel and heading towards her. Memories of boarding the plane were long forgotten as they left the airport, heading to rent a car.

"You're tired," he said as she yawned for the tenth time in the past five minutes. " Maybe we should leave the car and just get a ride to the hotel."

"No," she said, " I'll be fine. We'll need the car so that we can visit Tai and Sora tomorrow."



She looked a tad confused at the request. He could only guess what was going through her mind because it took her a minute or two to answer. " Uh, sure, I could get you oneâ€¦if you want, but the bed is a doubleâ€¦"

"Can you get it?" he asked, a sudden blush appearing on his face.

"I'll see what I can do," she replied, turning away so that. She picked up the phone and punched in a number, waited for a few minutes, and eventually she came back and said, " Um, there should be one up there, but if there isn't there's nothing I can do. We have two soccer teams and some people competing in some music thing staying here, so all of the other cots and such are being used. Sorry for the inconvenience."

"Oh, it's okay," Mimi said as she turned away from the counter. " I'm sure everything will work out just fine. C'mon," she tugged slightly on his sleeve, " I need to get my sleep."

" Uh, sure," he said still blushing. "Thanks," he told the receptionist as he grabbed the bags and walked to a nearby elevator and took it up to the sixth floor.

\*\*\*

" Oh wow!" she exclaimed when he opened the door to the room. " Now this is more like it!" She took a good long look around the spacious room. It was more like a suite than a single room and she suspected that Matt had something to do with it. In the middle of the large blue painted room, was a large double canopy bed from which hung long gauzy pieces of some kind of blue material. It looked like silk though. She found a large cherry armoire. Next to that, was a small cherry desk, above which hung a large mirror. There was a large window, which she guessed overlooked the city, but it was too dark to tell. To her left was a large door which she guessed led to a luxurious bathroom. And on the walls, hung exquisite paintings, one of which, portrayed two angels standing in a beautiful field of flowers.

She put her purse down on one of two nearby chairs and walked over to the bed and feel back onto it. " Ohh this is soo comfortable!" she said excitedly. She looked back towards him and said slyly, " You spoil me. You really do. How am I \_ever going to pay you back for all this?"\_

—

He started blushing again but said, " You don't have to. It's all on me. Besides, you should know, I'm not that type."

"Oh," she said, " well, where \_are you going to sleep?"\_

—

"Here, I guess," he said gesturing towards a chair.

"Oh, okay. Well, I guess I'll go get changed."

"Huh?" he asked giving her a startled look.

" Well," she said coyly, " I'm not going to sleep in something as uncomfortable as this." She gestured down to the black jeans and green shirt she was wearing. She walked over to her duffel bag and rummaged around in it for a little bit before she drew back holding in her hands, a bundle of pink cloth. " My pajama's" she said as she noticed the look on his face. " Now, if you don't mind I'll be right back. That is, unlessâ€¦"

"No!" he said quickly. At the hurt look she gave him, he said, " Um, no, I guess you'd rather have your privacy."

"You're right, I'd rather," she said as she disappeared into the bathroom.

\_What is going on here? He thought as he changed too.\_

—

She emerged from the bathroom about ten minutes later, her previous clothing rolled into a ball in her hands. She was now wearing a pair of long legged pajama's that had a matching over sized top that fell past her knees. The sleeves were too long as well and the covered her hands. She hung her clothers in the armoire and went and sat on the edge of the bed, facing him. When she started laughing softly, a slight tinkling sound like a soft bell, he asked, " What?"

" You lookâ€¦awful," she teased.

He looked down at the large black t-shirt and gray sweat pants he was wearing and said to her, " Well, you don't look too hot either."

" Well, at least it's better than you."

No reply. Both were silent for a few minutes before he said, " You know, for some crazy reason, I just can't help but think of the time right after Gomamon digivolved to Ikkakkumon for the first time, do you remember?"

"You mean the mansion?"

"Yeah, it's just thatâ€¦"

"What?"

"I don't know, I mean, it just brings back so many memories of the Digiworld and our Digimon."

"Yeah," she said, " I wonder how Palmon and all of them are doing. I miss them so much."

" I just can't believe how naive we were back then. When I think about it, a mansion in the middle of nowhere, with a table all set for a feast, but no one in sight. We should have known that it was a trap."

"It doesn't matter now," she said.

"Yes it does!" he exploded. " if I didn't know a trap then, how will I protect you now!?"

No reply. " I'm sorry," he said slowly, "it's just thatâ€¦"

" It's okay," she said. " I was wrong to doubt you. I deserved it." She looked away as tears filled her eyes again.

He really got to you, didn't he? He thought as he walked over and sat next to her. He reached out to put a hand on her shoulder, but she pulled away from the touch. He reached out again and this time put his hand on her shaking shoulder, but that only made her cry even harder, so he pulled back his hand. He'll pay for hurting you like this. He'll pay.\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_

He reached out again and drew her into a tight hug. She was shocked and he knew this because she stiffened momentarily before relaxing. She clutched at his shirt and began to cry harder. He kissed the top of her head lightly and whispered, "I'm sorry, no one deserves to be yelled at like that, or hurt like you were. I promise I'll never let that happen to you again."

Through her tears, she looked up at him again and asked, " You mean it?"

He looked down at her, eyes filled with love and kissed her passionately. After about a minute, they broke apart. " Does that answer your question?" he asked, smiling.

She smiled back and whispered, " Yes. Yes it does."

\*\*\*

She tried in vain to stifle another yawn.

" You should go to sleep," he said as he stood up.

" Yeah, I guess," she yawned. He walked away.

" Hey, where are you going?" she asked.

" I'm sleeping over here, remember?" he said as he grabbed a jacket from his bag and draped it over himself like a blanket as he sat down in the chair.

" That's going to be uncomfortable," she said, concerned.

" Oh, it'll be better than sleeping in dirt with rocks for pillows," he joked.

She sat up. " You sleep over here. I'll take the chair."

" No, you're sleeping over there."

" No."

"Yes."

"No."

"Yes."

"No."

"Yes, and that's that."

She was silent for about a minute before saying, " Well, then, I'll stay over here, if you come over here."

"What?"

She patted the empty space next to her. " It'll be innocent, right?"

" I'm not going to do that. I'm staying here."

" Well, if you're going to be uncomfortable, it's only right that I should be too. I'm coming over there."

"No you're not."

" Yes I am."

"No"

"Yes"

"Fine."

"Fine what?"

"I'll come over there. But I'm only going to \_sleep." He put emphasis on the last word.\_

—

" What makes you think I was thinking differently?" she asked, confused.

"What you were were saying earlier. What you were hinting at."

"Huh?" She paused, lost in thought " Oh that, you should have known that I was only kidding." She climbed in the bed, pulling the thick covers over her.

" That's a relief," he said as he climbed in the bed next to her. " Good night, sweet thing," he said.

" Goodnight you old crow," she teased.

\*\*\*

\*\* About five minutes laterâ€|\*\*

\*\*

" Hey, are you still awake?" he whispered in the darkness.

" Yeah," she answered.

" Why, can't you sleep?"

A long paused. " It's just thatâ€¦" she paused, " never mind."

" No, really, why?"

" It's stupid."

" Tell me, please."

" Okay, it's just thatâ€¦I feelâ€¦"

" Guilty?" he finished.

" Yes. I mean, I'm glad to be here with you. I love you and everything, but, I mean," she paused, " Frank \_ is still my fiancÃ©e. I haven't officially broken the engagement yet, so in reality, I still belong to him." In the darkness, he could hear her crying.\_

—

He felt something resembling either jealousy or rage well up inside his heart, but he managed to keep his voice calm. " Listen," he paused, " you never belonged to anyone and you certainly don't now."

" You're wrong," she said softly, " Iâ€¦my heartâ€¦they now belong to you and you alone."

He was silent, shocked by her admission, but finally, he said, " Thank you."

" For what?" she asked.

" For giving me another chance," he turned towards her and noticed that she was turned towards him. Even in the darkness, her eyes shone with the love she felt. It warmed his heart immensely. " I'm so grateful to you. Thank you for everything." She pushed herself up slightly, leaned over and kissed him softly.

" You're welcome."

\*\*\*

A few minutes later, he had slipped into a peaceful slumber, his chest rising in a steady rhythm, but she was awake, her mind in constant turmoil. She looked over at his sleeping form and in her mind, asked, \_What am I doing here?\_

—

She felt as though a war was being waged inside her head. Part of her, the part that had always told her what was right from wrong, was telling her that just being here was a mistake. That part wanted her just to slip out and run back to Frank. Then, there was another part that was telling her that this was wrong too, but was also telling her not to go back to Frank. It was telling her just to disappear back into the crowd. Then, there was the third voice, the one that



was telling her that this was perfectly all right, telling her that Frank had lost her when he first hurt her. It was telling her that this was what was meant for her.

Her thoughts were interrupted when he turned towards her. For a second, she thought that he might have awoken, but it soon became clear that he was just turning in his sleep. She took a good long look at his peaceful form. She remembered all that they had been through the past few days. She reached out and gently brushed a stray piece of hair off of his face.

\_Yes, she thought, \_This is what I want. It is.\_\_

---

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## 8. Episode 3 Part 2: Return

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# Every Rose Has Its Thorns

[illegible]

\* \*

**\*\* Disclaimer: I do not own Digimon. Never have and never will. I do own Celeste, Aries and the Elder though, so don't steal them.\*\***

\* \*

\*\*Author's note: Okay, for those of you who have been reading this little " series", here's something you should know. In this part, I do a little switachroo with the POV's. I will be switching between the POV's of the different Digidestined, but still, mostly, Mimi and then I'll still keep the third person view. If this is confusing for you, please don't flame me. This is just the easiest way for me to write this part, okay? Sorry for it sucking, especially after me taking so long, but I \_do have a life! ( and not to mention, awful writer's block!) Good, Also, there is going to be a sequel to this story, but only if you guys want it, ok? So lemme know what you think. All right? Well, I'll let you know in the final part. Now to the story! \*\*

\* \*

[illegible]

### # Part Three: Return

\* \*

## P.O.V- Mimiâ€¦

Then, there was the last painting, the one of the angels. It was a lovely painting, but something about it bothered me immensely. I don't know, maybe it was just because it reminded me of the two digital angels, Angemon and Angewomon. That alone was enough to dredge up memories of the digital past. I shuddered as I thought of

all those close calls that we had and how we had managed to get out of them. The only way that we had been able to survive and win, was for us to band together and fight as a team. Sure, we had won some battles in what you might call an individualistic way, but even then, our friends were still there, supporting us as always. Even when we were separated, everyone was there for everyone else, if only in spirit. That meant that the digidestined, we, were a team that could never be broken apart, even by death. Even in the darkest of times, we would always be together. Our fates were one, a single thread, albeit, maybe a bit frayed in places, but still one whole thread, each member combining themselves with the others the make up their true destiny, as do individual strands make up a thread, but only when they work together.

That thought, that we, the digidestined were one for always, was enough to conquer my fears and bring peace to my amibivalent emotions that ran rampant inside my heart, torturing me day and night, never giving me rest, until now. Deep inside, I knew that no matter what happened, it was meant to be. The digidestined would be together forever, even in death, no matter what happened, we would \_always be one, and that, was the most comforting thought, of all.\_

—

\*\*\*

As I continued looking around, remembering thoughts long buried, my eyes fell upon the sleeping form beside me. As they did, feelings, true feelings, long forgotten, welled inside my heart, warming every fiber of my inner being. It had been too long a time, since I had last felt true love. What I had felt for Frank was a deep running friendship, something that I guess could have been easily mistaken for love. I guess that that very misconception, was what had nearly cost me my life. I would never forget what had happened then.

Because of that very fact, that deep friendship could easily be mistaken for love, I was extremely worried, at first, that that might be what was happening here, but now, now that the feeling of true love was revived in my heart I worried no longer. This was what was meant for me. This was what was meant for us both. This is what is meant for us all.

\*\*\*

As the sun slowly but surely ascended in the sky, I decided that it was time to get up. I had lain here too long already. If we were going to visit Tai and Sora today, then we had both better get up.

Reluctantly, I pushed myself into a sitting position and stretched again. I almost laid back down again, but when I realized that I was only going to fall asleep again, I got up and out of the bed.

Now that I was out of the bed, I had yet to decide what I was going to do, but my mind settled on taking a shower. Since I would take forever in the shower, I decided that I had better get in there early. With that, I headed off into the shower.

\*\*\*

\*\*\_Matt's P.O.V.\_\*\*

\*\*\_

The thing that woke me up, was the sun. It penetrated my sleepy haze, cleared all the fog from my mind and dragged me from my dreams, back into reality. When I actually awoke, it wasn't all that late. In fact, it was just about sunrise. I could just image what it looked like, the sun, bursting through the clouds in all its glory and splendor, gracing the world with its bright gaze. Beautiful? Yes it was, but not right now. Right now, I wanted to sleep, to return to my beautiful dreams, but my pleas fell on deaf ears and I felt myself slowly awakening. I didn't want to leave my dreams, no, not at all. There, I could control everything that happened and life would be wonderful, for me. Nonetheless, I opened my eyes and slowly looked around. The world, my world, was perfect there. The sun was now shining in thin shafts through the window and the rays were warm upon my skin. Comforting, but annoying. So, in order to avoid the sun's rays, I pulled the comforter over my head and turned onto my side. In doing so, my sleepy, blurry gaze lighted on the sleeping girl, no, woman beside me. Almost immediately, I was reminded of everything we had been through together, all the heartbreaks and tragedies, losing friends, leaving our homeland, then returning, but those thoughts had little relevancy to me. All that mattered in my mind, was that we were here now, together. We had survived all that had come to pass, and to me, that meant that we would survive everything that was to come. There was no way we couldn't.

\*\*\*

I took another quick look over a few minutes later and came to the conclusion that she was indeed awake. Pretending to be asleep, I managed to follow her gaze from picture to picture. She spent a long time on the first than compared to the time she spent on the other three. I don't know why, but when she got to the last picture, the one of the angels, she justâ€ something seemed to click. She had looked so frightened before when she looked up at the picture, and it took me a moment to realize why. She was reliving some of her memories of the digital past, and there were some things that none of us would wish to remember, but, when that something clicked, she looked as though she had been told her future and was okay with it. No one will ever know, how deeply that comforts me.

Those pictures were nice all right, and when I say that, I mean it, but those did not catch my eye so much as the third one did, the one of the woman and the rose. I don't know what about it caught my eye, I mean, it wasn't as majestic as the picture of the beach, and it wasn't as delicately beautiful as the last, but I felt that I was somehow drawn to it. As I mentioned before, I'm not really sure what drew me to it, but I knew only that I was.

As I looked at it, I got the distinct feeling, that there was more to this painting than it seemed. It had an almostâ€ mystical air about it, and I felt as though it was trying to convey an extremely important message to me, but I couldn't understand what it was.

Somehow, that brought the words of that woman, Aries, to mind. She had said something about not trusting everyone, but at the same time

not distrusting everyone. Last night and the night before I had pondered over their meaning and had come up with nothing except the obvious. I guess that only time would tell their true meaning.

In my mind, I derailed that train of thought started a new one. As I looked back over at her, I thought about many things, but one thought in particular settled on my mind. As I looked over at her and watched her stretch before she climbed out of the bed and walked off, into the shower, I presume, I realized that those beautiful dreams, that perfect life, the world I had wanted was right here. My dreams \_had come true, and now there was not a chance in hell that I was going to let them go.\_

—

\*\*\_P.O.V.- T.K. \_\*\*

\*\*\_

(\*\* A/N- all right, for those of you who are wondering, yes, T.K.'s in this already. I've put him, Daisuke ( there is NO way that I'm using those English names for the 02 characters except for Ken whose Japanese name I don't know \*\_\*) and Kari in this. They are here for my purposes, I'll explain why they're here in a little bit, and the reasons they're in the hotel are as follows: T.K.'s here because of that music thing that I mentioned in the last part ( he plays clarinet, don't ask me how, but he does), Kari's also here because of the music thing. (I've got her playing flute) and Daisuke's here because of the soccer thing. Okay? Good. Now, on with the story!)\*\*

\*\*

" What a day, what an awful day, and it's only 7 A.M. in the morning," I muttered to myself, somehow managing to stifle a yawn. \_Not only had we all had to perform for a crowd in the park yesterday, but we totally messed up and to top it all off, it was raining like there was no tommorrow! \_

—

I sighed as I continued to stuff various items into my large green duffel bag. \_At least we are returning home to Odaiba today. I thought, \_ and that means, that I can \*finally\* sit down and relax with out being bothered by anyone.\_\_

—

As I looked around the small room, that I and three of my fellow band members, I was really glad that we could head home today! Suddenly, interrupting my thoughts, there was a soft, familiar knocking at the door.

"Um, could one of you guys get it?" I asked my roomates. Since they all shook their heads, no, I got up and opened the door.

When I opened the door, I found Kari standing there smiling at me. She looked bit tired, and it appeared that she had a slight cold because of the way she sniffled occasionally, but she seemed okay.

" Good morning, T.K.," she said happily.

"Umâ€¦hi Kari," I stammered nervously. " What's up?"

" Nothing much," she answered. " I just came to say good morning, that's all." She seemed to pause as though she'd forgotten something.

" What's wrong?" I asked. " Forget something?"

" Yeah," she answered. There was another pause, but then her face lit up and she exclaimed,

> " Oh! Yeah!"<p>

" Oh yeah what?"

" You'll never guess who I saw at the hotel!"

—

" Who?" I asked sarcastically, " the Queen of England?"

"No silly," she teased. " I went down to get some breakfast earlier and I, literally, bumped into Daisuke!"

I inwardly groaned..Why did that hothead Daisuke have to be here? Now she was going to drag me downstairs to talk to my greatest rival. Ohâ€¦joy. Why did they have to meet today? Why? Kari and I were going to go and drop in at her brother's place, maybe spend a couple of hours then head back to Odaiba. Then, once we were there, maybe we'd go to see a movie or something. But, now, Daisuke knew that we were here so now, he would hang around us 24/7 and we'd never get to be alone! As I said before, oh, joy.

" Hey, T.K., are you going downstairs to get some breakfast?"

I was going to say something about not being hungry, when my stomach growled loudly in protest. I grimaced but managed to fake laughter and said, " Sure, why not?"

" Great!" she exclaimed as she grabbed onto my wrist and dragged me out of the room. Joy, I thought again. Oh, joy.

\*\*\*

When we got downstairs to the small dining area, I found that Daisuke had already gotten a table for us, there was a problem though, it only had two chairs. Oh well, I thought, I'll just drag another one from a nearby table.

" So there you are, T.S.," said Daisuke , " What took you and Kari so long? Hmm?"

I gave Kari this, I can't believe he's still the same, look and whispered to her, " I can't believe this. All these years and he still doesn't know my name!"

" I guess some things \_never change," she muttered back.\_

—

We stood there, just staring at the table, ignoring Daisuke's question, when Kari said, " Come on everyone, let's go sit somewhere else, this table's too small for all three of us."

Seeing, that since we weren't going to sit down, Daisuke followed me as I followed Kari to another table. We all sat down at this larger table and were going to get some food, but since the line was extremely long at this point in time.

" So, why are you here?" I asked Daisuke.

" Hmm? That's none of your business, T.R. All that matters, is that I \_am here. Someone's got to keep an eye on you two, and that someone, just so happened to be me." He turned to Kari, " So what are you here for?"\_

—

" I'm in the music competition with T.K."

" So," began Daisuke, " what do you play?"

> " She plays flute, first flute to be exact, and I play first clarinet." I said.<p>

" So, what?" Daisuke said to me. " What you play doesn't matter."

" It does to me!" Kari interjected, angry with Daisuke. Was it just me, or did Kari seem a little pale? She looked about ready to faint.

Concerned, I asked, " Kari, are you okay?"

Following my lead, Daisuke asked something similar.

For a long couple of moments, she said nothing, and we were both concerned that she had passed out—we shuddered to think of the "or worse".

" Kari?" Daisuke repeated.

"Something's happened," she said quietly, almost too low for us to hear.

Again, was it just me, or did I happen to see a faint outline of the crest of light on her forehead? I tried to shake it away. Our crests had been destroyed in the final battle against Apocalymon. It couldn't be, but, when I looked back, Daisuke too was staring at her as though he had seen a ghost. In that moment, I knew, what was happening. We had both seen it at least once before, it really depended on how long you had known her, but that didn't matter, as I said before, we both knew what was going on. She was having a premonition, and from the looks of it, it wasn't a good one, but that wasn't what scared us. What scared us, was that her premonitions always came true. \_Always.\_

—

"What do you see, Kari?" asked Daisuke.

" What do you see?" I echoed.

" Itâ€|it's not good," she said slowly.

## Kari's POV-

" Itâ€|it's not good," I said slowly. I saw their jaws drop at that, and T.K. began shaking his head slowly.

" What exactly do you see?" asked Daisuke. " We must know."

As I opened my mental eye again, I had a frightening vision of complete darkness. I shook my head again, and said " I don't know. It's too dark to see."

"You've got to try," said Daisuke.

I felt someone's hand take mine and I heard T.K. say, " Use your light, Kari, you aren't the child of light for nothing."

" I'll try," I said, " but, it's been so long since I used my crest power, I don't know if I can."

" You've got to try," Daisuke said. " We need to know to prevent whatever it is."

" Okay then," I said, " here goes nothing." In my mind, I managed to summon up an image of my crest of light. At first, though, it was dim and gave off little if no light. \_I've got to try! I must stop doubting myself! I've got to do this! I mentally scolded myself.\_

—

\_Come on! Please, I ask you, Light, please, lend me some of your glow. I need to see what is going on!\_

—

Sensing my thoughts, the image of my crest began to glow with a soft pink light. The light, although dim, allowed me to see my surroundings. As it turned out, I was in a long tunnel, with darkness at the other end.

\_Well, I thought, \_ there's nothing here, I don't see why I'm here. Maybe I should just leave.\_\_

—

\_ I turned around, to try and find my way out of the tunnel, when I heard something coming from behind me. It sounded all too like footsteps. I froze to the spot. \_Oh great! Someoneâ€|or something, is in here with me! I've got to run, but I can't! My legs won't move! It's as if I have taken root to this very spot!\_\_

—

" Don't be afraid," I heard a female voice call.

Slowly, I turned my head partway to see if I could identify the



person, at least, I hoped she was a person, who was standing behind me.

I found that she was indeed human, but as for her identity or appearance, I could tell neither, but somehow, I had the unshakable knowledge, that she was indeed a friend.

" Who are you?" I asked, surprised at the strength in my own voice.

The only response from her was a slight giggle, and she held out something in the palm of her hand, but in the almost tangible darkness, broken only by the slight light from my crest, I couldn't tell what it was. Although, it did seem somewhat familiar.

As she stood there, I could discern another figure move in the darkness. This one was a man, I could tell. Also, I knew that he was an enemy because he radiated an aura of hostility that I could sense even from this distance. I wanted to scream, but I couldn't. The shadow of the man moved behind that of the woman, but she didn't seem to notice it, she just stood there, completely oblivious to it. I could only watch helplessly as the man's shadow pulled something out of his pocket, a blade presumably, and with it, slashed the woman's throat, causing her form to fall to the ground, dead. I screamed, this time with more success than the last, my scream echoing through the suffocating silence of the tunnel. I then saw the man look up at me, and I was afraid that he was going to come after me, but thankfully, he didn't. He just stood there, staring before dragging the blade across his own throat, killing himself.

I screamed again because, right now, it was the only thing I could possibly do. Here I was, alone in a tunnel with two dead bodies in front of me. I felt rather than saw, the light of my crest die also, leaving me alone, cloaked in darkness.

\*\*\*

" Kari! Kari! Wake up!" I heard someone scream.

\_No I thought, just let me sleep. Please, this is so peaceful.\_

—

" Kari! Please!" I heard someone else scream.

" Don't leave me!" screamed the first person again, " please!"

\_Don't leave you? I'm not going anywhere.\_

—

"Please wake up!" screamed the first again. " Please! I'll always hang onto hope, please hang on to your light!"

" Just as I'll always hang on to my courage and my friendship," said the second, " please hang on to your beautiful light."

That's when it happened. I felt three strong virtues flow into my heart, strengthening me, making me aware of my surroundings. I was

laying, unconscious on the floor of the dining area. At first glance, it seemed that I had simply passed out, but inside I knew that it was much serious. I knew that if I didn't wake up now, I never would again.

\_ My light will shine again! It must!\_

-

With a burst of self-will and self-preservation, I managed to drag myself from the recesses of my mind, back to consciousness. Unwillingly, I managed to pry my eyes open, but closed them just as soon against the bright light. I gave my eyes a moment to adjust before even attempting to open them again. When I did however, I found myself staring into a pair of worried blue eyes and another pair of equally worried dark brown ones.

" Kari! You're awake!" Daisuke exclaimed. " What happened?"

I paused for a moment, not sure if I should burden my friends with the horrors of that premonition. " Oh, nothing," I lied, " I just passed out. It must be this cold, or somethingâ€¦" my voice trailed off into nothingness.

They both gave me an, I know you're lying look, but decided to say nothing more about it. As I looked around the room, I noticed that the eyes of everyone in the room were upon me, and that made me feel uncomfortable, in the least. Why are you staring at me??? I wanted to scream. Just leave me alone! Stay away from me! Stay away!

"Kari?"

T.K.'s voice broke into my mental daze and with a start, I realized that I was slipping into another vision, and if this one was anything like the last, I didn't want to have anything to do with it.

" I'm alright, T.K.," I said.

" Are you sure?" Daisuke asked.

" Positive. I'll be fine." They helped me to my feet, but I found that my legs were shaking uncontrollably. They just wouldn't stop, they wouldn't provide me with much support for walking, so I decided to sit at the table instead. It was then, when I sat down, that I realized that , my entire body was shaking. It was as though I was having some sort of seizure, but I knew that I wasn't. It was probably because of the vision.

" You want something to drink?" T.K. asked.

" Um," I paused, " anything would be fine." I decided.

" I'll stay here with, Kari," stated Daisuke.

" Fine," I said. I wasn't really in the mood to hear those two fight.

" Kari?"

" What, Dai?"

" Um, if it's okay," he paused, " you know I've got to ask this, but what did you see in your vision?"

" What vision?" I asked, flustered.

He pounded his fist on the table, " Please," he pleaded in a so unlike Dai way, " don't lie to me. I knowâ€¦I know that you had a vision. We all do. Please. What was it about?"

" Yes, Kari, you must tell us what it was about," said T.K. as he set a small plastic cup in front of me.

" Thanks for the drink," I said, " but I can't tell you about this. It'sâ€¦it's too traumatic." I stopped and took a sip from the cup.

They both were silent for a moment, but then T.K. said in a low tone, " Someone's going to die, aren't they? Is that what's going to happen? Is one of us, the Digidestined, going to die?"

I set the cup down with such a force that some of the liquid spilled over the top and onto the table. " I said I didn't want to talk about it!" I shouted. " Please! Don't ask me anymore!"

I couldn't take this anymore, this was too much. I didn't want them to have to experience the sheer terror and helplessness that I had experienced. I knew that, at least, the woman who was killed was one of us, a Digidestined, or at least, someone that was familiar, very familiar, to me. I knew that the object she held out was the key to her identity, but I couldn't see it! I couldn't see it! I didn't want them to know that nighthmarish scenario that had played out in my mind. But, maybe it wasn't about them. Maybe, maybe, it was all about me. Maybe, I didn't want to tell them that I didn't know who it was, maybe, \_I didn't want to go through that whole ordeal again. Maybe, all this apprehension, was all about my own fear.\_

—

Whatever it was, I knew that I couldn't stand this anymore. I stood up from my seat at the table, and took off towards the corridor. I ran towards the elevator and took it up. I didn't care which floor I got out on, I didn't want them to find me, so I selected a floor number randomly. 6, I guess that that would do, so I asked the elevator attendant to take me up to the sixth floor. Just as the doors of the elevator slammed shut, I saw T.K. and Daisuke standing there, yelling for me to wait, that they had something to tell me, but I paid no heed to their cries.

## Daisuke's POV-

" Great job, genius," I said as we watched Kari run out of the room and into the corridor. " You made her upset."

" I'm in no mood for your jokes now," he said solemnly, " we've got a bigger problem on our hands."

" What's that?" I asked, confused.

T.K. clenched his fists, frustrated. " You just don't get it do you?!" he burst out. " you just don't understand! I was right."

" So, what?"

T.K. took a few deep breaths and it looked as though he was going through some kind of internal struggle, before he said, " I was right. One of us Digidestined is going to die."

" Who?!" I exclaimed.

" I don't know who!" he said forcefully. He looked out towards the corridor. " Only she would, and I have a feeling, that she's not going to tell us."

" We'd better go after her," I said. " Where do you think she's headed?"

" To the elevators, she'll try to lose us," he said as he started off.

On our way out, we passed a tv that was sitting near the door. As I passed by, something on the screen caught my eye. " Hey T.K.!" I called, " hold it a sec!"

" What?" he asked, irritated.

" Take a look at this," I said as I pointed to the screen. " I saw somethingâ€¦I mean, I think I saw one of the Digidestined's faces on the screen a moment ago.

## T.K.'s POV.Â--

When Daisuke told me that he had seen one of our faces on the screen, my heart clenched. A news broadcast was on, and what they were covering right now, was a death.

It seemed that Kari's premonition was coming true, but the question was, who was it. Who had died? That question was to be answered in a few seconds.

"â€¦it was such a tragedy, Mitch," said the female reporter. She was standing outside a large hospital in what appeared to be New York. " The way she ended up here was tragic in itself, but what was even more ironic was the way she diedâ€¦"

\_Who?! I mentally screamed at the tv. \_Who are you talking about?!\_\_

—

"â€¦she was making excellent progress and the doctors here figured that she would soon emerge from her four month coma, despite what doctors from other hospitals said. She was off life support and she showed no signs of any serious health problems. That is why everyone was so shocked when model and actress, Mimi Tachikawa died of a cardiac arrestâ€¦"

\_Kari was right! That's all I found myself thinking. \_She was dead on, literally. One of us, us had died. She was right, but how I

wished that she was wrong. I wished that none of us would have to have died, I wished for it from the bottom of my soul, but I knew that now, wishes could do nothing.\_\_\_

—

" Come on!" said Daisuke, breaking my train of thought, " we've got to find Kari! We've got to tell her what's happened!"

I don't know, but when I heard Daisuke's statement, to me, it seemed almost like a heresy. He was telling me that even though one of my close friends had died that I shouldn't mourn. It took me a few minutes to realize that he was right though. Now wasn't the time for mourning, not until we were all together. I doubt that the others had heard yet. It really killed me to be the bearer of bad news, but Iâ€|we had to tell them. It was our duty and we couldn't stop to mourn until all of us Digidestined were together. I stood frozen in front the tv for a few seconds more, digesting this new information, before my body actually reacted and I managed to say, " Let's go."

"Right behind you!" called Daisuke solemnly as he followed me.

It took us a about a minute to catch up with Kari since she had a head start, but it helped that we both knew where she was heading. It was I who spotted her. We saw her step into an elevator and we managed to catch up to her in time to hear what floor she was going to, but not to stop her. We ran up to the elevator shouting that we had something to tell her, something important, but the elevator doors slammed shut in both our faces, effectively silencing us.

## Kari's POV

When T.K. and Daisuke came running up to the elevator, I already knew what they were going to say. They were going to tell me that my premonition had come true, one of us, the Digidestined had died, but the main question was, who?

As much as I wanted an answer to that terrible question, I also didn't want one. I just wanted to hear that none of us had died. That's all, but I knew that wasn't going to come anytime soon. All of my friends cared too much to lie to me. All of them. There was no escaping the fact, but I thought that I'd try anyway.

As soon as the elevator hit the sixth floor, I didn't wait to dash off and lose myself in the maze of hallways that lay spread out before me. I knew that T.K. and Daisuke would be coming after me soon, so I had to get lost very quickly. I decided that the simplest way would be the best way, so I took the hallway directly in front of me. I made a system of right turns and maybe one of two left ones, until I found myself a nice quiet, seeming hallway where I collapsed to the ground, both physically and mentally exhausted.

I leaned back against the wall and tilted my head upwards, my eyes sliding shut against my wishes. I didn't get any sleep, however. Through the wall, I could hear a couple talking, discussing some important matter, I guess, I was really too tired to bother. Then, a door down the hall opened up and some one, a man, exited the room and headed in my general direction, a look of confusion, but above all, concern covering his face.

He stopped walking a few steps from my position and I sensed something familiar about him as he asked, " Are you okay, miss?"

## Matt's POV

"Are you okay, miss" I asked. There were many reasons for my asking that question, for one, you don't normally see someone sitting in the hallway of a luxury hotel, half-asleep. If that was the situation, it was probably some guy who had been thrown out of the room by his female counterpart, but this wasn't the case (obviously). For that reason I was concerned. There was something about her, an aura surrounding her, that drew me inexplicably to her.

Now don't get me wrong here, it's not like I was interested in her or anything, I mean, she looked way younger than I was, and besides, I had already found my true love. There was some feeling though, and it was a feeling I knew well, though I couldn't exactly put my finger on it. There was something strange about her, I knew that. I felt as though I knew her, as though we were friends at some point, but she didn't look like anyone I knew, but I had this strange feeling that I did and that I would feel utterly stupid when I found out.

The sensation tugged at my soul, beckoning me forward, and I would have fought it, except for the fact that I didn't want to. Part of my soul feltâ€|connected to her somehow, and I knew I had to determine that link.

She looked up at me with huge brown eyes and for a moment, I thought that I might have seen a flicker of recognition in them, but when she asked who I was, that all died away.

I was about to make a reply when I heard a clearly audible commotion coming from down the main hallway which ran just parallel to this one. I heard the sounds of loud, graceless footsteps, then I heard two male voices shout, almost in perfect unison, " Kari! Where are you?!"

My eyes widened in shock. \_Kari? I thought, \_ as in Hikari, the bearer of the Light crest? I shook my head, reminding myself that there could be any number of people who had that name, I mean, I was in Japan. I told myself repeatedly that she could not possibly be the same person I was thinking of, butÂ---if she was, that would explain that undeniable bond, that connection that I felt.\_\_

—

My heart quickened as I also realized that the two voices I had just heard \_also seemed vaguely familiar, although I couldn't place them. I \_knew I knew them, I knew that they belonged somehow in the mosaic that was my existence, but what I didn't know, was how.\_\_

—

I turned back towards the young woman who still sat cross-legged on the floor, with a dull realization that she was somehow the key to understanding all this, and that she knew, she \_knew what my future was to bring, but from the expression on her face, I wasn't sure that I was going to like it.\_

—

She stood up now at the sound of what I presumed was her name and turned, her deep eyes fear-filled, to run, but I put my hand out in front of her, effectively stopping her in her tracks. Her gaze met mine. I could see that she was determined to elude whoever was following her, calling out for her, and that she was thoroughly ticked at my interference, but I didn't relent. When I didn't, she glared at me again, her eyes shooting daggers, and unleashed a blood-curling scream of fake terror.

I heard a loud commotion coming from down the main hallway as the people who were pursuing her picked up on the scream. At first, I was terrified that the scream was going to attract hordes of attention, but, for some reason, most people ignored it and went about their business, except for the two that were chasing her. In a moment, two young men rounded the corner, both looking as though they had run a mile or two. I felt a strange connection to them as well as well as to the strange woman. I just couldn't pick it out and it was bugging the hell out of me!

Anyway, when the two other men saw the woman, who I presumed they'd been looking for, their faces hardened.

"Get away from her!" yelled the tall, blond one, his expression serious.

My eyes widened in shock, I felt the connection stronger than ever, it surged through me, touching every fiber of my being, searching for some sign of recognition, but I had none, if I had known this person, I could tell that I hadn't seen him in ages. I felt the bond, but was unable to do anything about it. I could see the recognition flash, not only in his eyes, but also, across his entire face. In that moment, a vision came to me. A vision of a burning, yellow sun with a long flowing, equally yellow structure beneath it, that could only be described as as 'cape'. I gasped sharply. Of course! How stupid I must be not to recognize my own brother! Now all the rest fit into place, the young woman was Kari Kamiya, and the other man must be Daisuke! It all fit into place!

Deep in my thoughts, I didn't notice that T.K. was talking to me, apparently, he recognized me as well, but the other two didn't and were staring at us.

T.K. and I stood in silence for a few minutes, just staring, but then he broke the silence by saying, " Oniichan!"

" Long time no see, T.K.!" I replied as I scooped my no longer little brother up in a huge bear-hug as Daisuke and Kari looked on. I know Kari picked up on what was going on, because she relaxed somewhat, but Daisuke still looked confused. Out of my peripheral vision, I saw Kari give Daisuke a resounding whack on the head before explaining to him what was going on.

T.K. took a few steps back from me before letting out a long sigh of relief. I opened my mouth to ask him what was going on, but he turned to Kari.

" Kari," he said slowly, " I guess you already know what we were going to tell you, right?"

" That I was right? If that's what you two were going to tell me, then you, unfortunately, are right."

" It's a real shame," Daisuke said quietly.

I shook my head in utter confusion. " What are you talking about?" I asked, finally.

All three of them turned to me as though I had just asked the dumbest question in the world, but then they realized that I \_did have no clue as to what they were talking about, so, they briefly explained the whole scene that had played out downstairs and what had happened up to this point.\_

—

When I heard Kari say that one of the Digidestined had died, at first, I was shocked, but, then I remembered Code Blue and I couldn't help but laugh out loud. In return, I received looks of utter confusion mixed with disgust and anger from the other three.

Daisuke opened his mouth to say something, when he was interrupted by a voice that came from behind me.

" Good morning."

## Mimi's POV-

##

## " Good morning," I chirped happily, receiving curious stares from Kari, T.K. and Daisuke, in turn, but I ignored them.

## " Good morning, Lin," said Matt, smiling an almost fake looking smile. It took a second for him to realize that Kari, T.K. and Daisuke had absolutely no idea who I wasâ€|yet.

\_ They will soon though, I thought. \_They will soon.\_\_\_\_

—

" Who's she?" Daisuke asked,as though reading my thoughts.

"Just a friend," I answered in reply, hoping that they wouldn't question that response.

" Oh," muttered Daisuke under his breath, apparently not satisfied with that answer. Our little group stood in silence, and I received penetrating stares from them all as though they were deciding whether or not I was a friend. \_They should know. I couldn't help but think.\_

—

" What's your name?" T.K. asked finally.

With practiced ease I replied, " Lin."

" Lin what?"



" Lin Hishika."

" Oh, all right." With that ending note, he fell back into silence.

" What's going on here?" I decided to ask.

After a few moments, my question was answered. Matt turned to me, and with as much solemnity as he could manage ( which was, in my opinion about as solemn as me on a sugar rush, but it seemed to fool the others partly, if not completely) said, " One of my close friends just died, noâ€|was murdered by another friend of mine."

When I heard that, I wanted to burst out laughing and I realized why he was laughing when I had entered the hallway, but I managed to keep myself under some measure of control and said, " I'm sorry. It must be awful for you."

" Well, I'm glad you think so," spat Daisuke, " you don't even know what we're going through. Hell! You don't even know who we really are, yet you say that you're sorry. You can't even know what we're really going through! But your friend over there, who knows all of what we've gone and are going through doesn't give a damn!"

" Who says that I don't care!" Matt shot back. " I probably care more than all of you! You all may know her, but she was part of us older Digidestined, not your group! She belonged to a different time and it wasn't yours!"

" Hey! Kari and I were part of that group as well! Brother, how could you even say that we don't care?!" shouted T.K. angrily. "Besides!" he continued, " I know for a fact that you don't care! You said so yourself all those years ago!"

" What are you talking about?! Matt yelled back, equally angry.

" Iâ€|\_I was there!" T.K. yelled gesturing emphatically towards himself with his finger, " I was there when you yourself said that you would have cared less if she had died!"\_

—

Matt froze, unable to speak. Truthfully, even I was surprised that T.K. still remembered it. The only reason I even remembered, was because of how deeply that statement had hurt me, but now that it was forgiven, I had almost forgotten. After a few minutes, Daisuke shattered the silence and continued arguing.

" It doesn't matter which group she belonged to! She isâ€|was still a Digidestined! She was one of us!" exclaimed Daisuke.

I couldn't stand this. No more, no more fighting! I wouldn't let friendsâ€|my friends treat each other in this way. I couldn't. I couldn't bear it anymore.

My temper skyrocketed obliterating any control I had left. My small hands clenched into fists and I exploded with a cry of, " Everyone shut up now!"

My fist shot out and caught a very surprised Matt in the jaw. " Shut up everyone!" I screamed again, hot angry tears flying from my eyes. " You'll never understand what \_I've had to go through! What you've gone through is nothing compared to what I've gone through!" My hand flew up to my neck and tore my crest away, the string cutting with a refreshing, yet sickening snap. I cast it away from me, feeling as though I was casting away everyone I've ever known. I flung it into the midst of the startled group and without another thought, turned and bolted down the hallway, ran into the room and bolted the door behind me.\_

—

\*\*\_3rd Person POV-\_\*

\*\*\_

Everyone in the thoroughly surprised group could do nothing except stand and gape in absolute shock for the first few moments. Kari was the first to recover. Bending down slowly and uncertainly, she gently picked up the small brownish object, cupping it protectively in her shaking hands. It took her about a moment to recognize it, but when she did, her hazel eyes widened in shock.

"Oh my," she breathed. " I don't believe it!"

" What is it?" asked Daisuke and T.K. simulataneously.

Kari said nothing as she handed it to T.K. Daisuke peered at it over his shoulder. Kari shot Matt a record breaking evil glare, but he simply stood to the side, brooding and rubbing his sore jaw. Kari moved over to the others' side and watched as their faces widened in complete shock.

T.K. looked up. " You mean thatâ€|that?"

Matt nodded without speaking, affirming his brother's conclusions.

" But how?" asked Daisuke. " I thought she wasâ€|"

" It's a long story," Matt said, cutting Daisuke off. " I'll explain later."

" Anyway," said Kari, " we know that Lin is actually Mimi, but we need to find her. We need to find answers! Did anyone see where she went?"

" I think she went into that room there," said T.K.

" Yeah," chorused Daisuke.

" Well then," said Kari, " what're we waiting for?"

" Nothing. Let's go," said Daisuke.

They took the few steps down the hall to the door that T.K. had indicated and which he now banged on with his fist. " Hey! Open up will you?"

Matt said nothing, but placed a hand on his brother's shoulder and

gently pushed him to the side. Pulling a key from his pocket, he silently inserted it into the lock, and unlocked the door. He stepped inside without so much as a noise leaving the others to follow. They all stepped into the luxurious suite. T.K. stopped walking to look about causing Kari and Daisuke, who also weren't paying attention, to bump into him.

" You were staying here with her the whole time?" queried T.K. raising an eyebrow. When his brother didn't answer, T.K. didn't bother to question the matter any further.

They found her curled up on the large bed, sobbing uncontrollably. T.K. Kari and Daisuke were all moved to sympathy, but Matt, who was still rubbing his sore jaw, was a different story.

" Who the hell do you think you are?!" he roared.

Her head shot up and her eyes, which were red from crying for so long, widened in horror. He stalked up to the bed and harshly grabbed her by the arm, dragging her off the bed. He threw her against the wall causing her to cry out in pain.

\*\*\_Mimi's POV-\_\_\*\*

\*\*\_

Pain soared through my body as it made contact with the hard surface of the wall and my head was spinning. Who was I? Where was I? Why was the person mad at me?

" What gives you the right to hit me! You have no right at all!"

\_You have no right to treat me like this either! I wanted to scream. There were so many other things that I wanted to say, but the problem was, that I couldn't bring myself to say them.\_

—

" You're worthless!"

\_I am not worthless! I am a human being!\_

—

He raised his hand to strike me and terrifying images flashed through my head. Several times, I thought that it was Frank standing before me. My defenses crumbled as I began to cry. I felt as though I could do nothing else. I wasn't strong enough to fight back. Frank was rightâ€¦about everything. I was weak, I was hopeless, I was worthlessâ€¦ I sank to my knees

I closed my eyes and waited for the pain of the blow to come, but when it didn't, I cracked open my eyes. I found that T.K., unable to bear this sight, had stepped forward and grabbed his brother's hand before it could even descend. Daisuke now knelt by my side with his hand on my shoulder, surveying the scene. Kari stood at a distance, looking as though she was about to faint.

\*\*\_Kari's POV-\_\_\_\*\*

\*\*\_\_

It was happening again. The hideous premonition that had overwhelmed me downstairs came flooding back into my mind. I remembered it all now because I saw it playing out before me. Now I understood why the object the woman held out was so familiar! I held it in my hands this very moment! It was a crest and not just any crest, it was the crest of Sincerity.

But, still, something about this scene wasn't right, it didn't feel right. Of course, there wasn't anything right about the premonition in itself, but this wasn't what it was trying to warn us about. No, it foretold something far more hideous than this, something far more terrifying. I vainly wished that we would never have to find out what that something was, but I knew that regardless of the premonition, there was nothing I could do to stop it.

I felt my knees buckle and a wave of dizziness engulfed me. For a moment, I thought I was going to pass out again, but I didn't. Those symptoms meant something more ghastly. The image of the tunnel sprang up in my mind again as did the horrible chain of events that occurred there. This time though, I knew what was going to happen, but was still helpless to interfere. I cried out. I don't know whether I thought I did or if I actually did, but it seemed that my cries had been heard for there was a new person introduced. This one walked up to me, and clasped my hands in his assuring me that everything would be all right and encouraging me to open my eyes.

I opened my eyes.

## Daisuke's POV-

If there was anything I hated being, it was a spectator, but right now, that was all I could be. When Kari, T.K. and I saw what was transpiring, I promised Kari that I would protect Mimi and I wasn't about to go back on my word now. I almost did though. Kari, who stood a good distance away from where everything was happened, now looked as though she was about to faint again. Something in her expression unnerved me and I felt my stomach turn sickeningly. It reminded me of how she looked as she was having that premonition and my only guess was that she was having another one, or that the same one was repeating.

I felt so useless! Was there nothing that I could do to help anyone? Yes. There was.

" T.K.," I said.

" What?" was his reply.

" Kari doesn't look too well. Go to her. I'll take care of this."

He looked at me, eyes wide with shock. " Are you sure? I'd probably better be able to take care of this. Why don't you go?"

I smirked at him. " Are you calling me weak? Get going before I do change my mind."

" All right then," said T.K. with a nod. " I appreciate it."

" No problem," I returned as I stood between the two warring Digidestined, T.K. walked off.

## T.K.'s POV-

\_What's wrong with everyone today? I asked myself. \_Everyone's acting so strangely. Mimi's suffering from a badly broken spirit, Kari's having one premonition after another, Matt is on one short fuse today and Daisuke's being noble. I'm surprised that I haven't changed to day!\_\_

—

\_ Maybe it was just the day. I walked over to a very pale and obviously ailing Kari, knelt down beside her.\_

—

It was more than obvious that she was having a premonition and from the looks of it, it was the same one from earlier. It appeared, though, that she was handling it better than before. Probably because she knew what was going to happen this time. From the look on her face however, it still was awful.

I knelt beside her and took her shaking hands in my own ( \*\*A/N: All together now "Awwwwwwwwwwwwwwww!!!!), wanting nothing more than to eradicate all of her fears.\*\*

\*\*

" Kari," I said, " it's me, T.K.. Please. If you ever do anything for me, please do this. Please, please, open your eyes."

" I can't," she mumbled. " Even if I did, it would still be too dark to see. There's no point."

" Now you don't know that for sure, do you?"

She paused. " Well, no, I don't, butâ€¦"

" Then it couldn't hurt to try, now could it?"

" Well, I guess not."

She drew a deep breath, before cracking her eyes open slowly. Soon I found myself staring into those hazel orbs that enchanted me so much. Right now, nothing ever looked so beautiful to me. I was so drawn into those spheres that I almost forgot about the more immediate problem, my brother and his so-called girlfriend.

## Matt's POV-

What the hell was I thinking?! How could I possibly ever do this to anyone, let alone someone I claimed I loved! The problem was, I wasn't thinking. My mind was so overcome with rage, that all thought patterns were completely erased, but still, that's absolutely no excuse for what I did. No excuse whatsoever.

" What have I done?" The words escaped my lips before they even

registered in my mind. My entire body went numb and I fell to my knees, my legs unable to support me.

" I'm sorry," I whispered, hot bitter tears stinging my eyes. " I'm sorry," I repeated, sobbing.

" Well, well," said Daisuke, bitterly, " you should be after what you did."

I turned away from his gaze, unable to meet it.

" In case you didn't know," Daisuke continued, " I do know about what happened with her fiancée, all of us do and we're not going to let history repeat itself! We'll do whatever it takes to protect her from her enemies and if you become one of them, then so be it!"

(\*\* A/N: There is a reason why Daisuke is acting this way, but it has no relation to the storyâ€|yet.")\*\*

\*\*

I continued looking toward the window, not wanting to turn back to meet Mimi's gaze. I had hurt her so much. Once before and now again. Who knows what the future would bring.

My mind wandered back to my train of thought from earlier this morning. I had foolishly thought that we had to survive all of the future events. I had thought that we were immune to Fate. I had underestimated Life itself and now, I was paying for my foolish mistakes.

My heart sank. Now I would probably lose the only person I could possibly ever love. It would be beyond miracles if she would accept me back now. It would have to be.

Finally, after what seemed to be an eternity, I turned back to them. " I'm sorry," I repeated, my voice now nothing more than a hoarse rasp, sounded harsh and unfamiliar to me. I looked up, meeting her gaze uneasily. I continued speaking. " I know that doesn't atone at all for what I did and what I might have done, and I know it sounds cliched and all, but it's the only thing I can think of to say." I looked away again. " It's funny," I said to myself, " there are over 1,000 ways to say 'I'm sorry', but there's nothing to make it any easier to say."

I couldn't help remembering back when she had told me that she had started dating Frank because of how he reminded her of me, I had thought that I couldn't be anything like him. It was only now that I realized how truly like him I was. We all have a cruel streak in us, in some people it's just more prominent than others. Perhaps, everything was triggered by pride. I now, just realized the true truth about pride, but perhaps it is one of those things that you just know all along. Without my pride, I would not be where I am now, and that is in more ways than one. Pride is a vine that bears two types of fruit, life and death. I have seen and met both, although I am better acquainted with life, than with death. Now, I can't help but feel that I am facing the ultimate death.

As I looked back at her, there was a tense silence between us, but after a moment, she gave a deep sigh and said softly, " I believe

him."

My heart soared, but I knew that I wasn't in the clear just yet. She had only said that she believed me, she hadn't said anything about forgiving me yet, and that would probably be the hardest thing in the world for her to do.

She paused uncertainly, as though she was trying to make up her mind. " I believe him. I don't think he would lie again. Not after what happened last time." She leaned over and took my hand. She lowered her voice so that only I and any one within a two inch radius could hear her. She spoke slowly and cautiously, as though one more word would cause her to break out in tears, " What I said last nightâ€¦I still mean. I can only hope that you love me as much as I do you."

I looked down at her hand in mine, looked back up and smiled sadly at her. " I don't love you as much as you love me." Her expression spiraled downwards, but I quickly said, " I know that it might be hard for you to believe this now, but I love you more."

She smiled again. "If such a thing is possible." I smiled back, this time, my expression was one of joy, as we embraced. I took her head in my hands and gazed into her eyes. I noticed unshead tears welling in her eyes. As they slipped out, I wiped them away with my thumb. In that moment, time seemed to stand still. I vaguely recalled once being told something about time standing still when you're truly madly deeply in love. \_Well, even if I hadn't known anything about that, what else could this be? All other thoughts were lost as we kissed. \_

—

I knew that all of the others except for my brother were staring in shock, but I didn't care, and I knew that she didn't either. All that mattered to me right now, was that I had her back. I now had my soul back and I could live again. We were back together, and hopefully, that will be how we stay. Forever and all eternity.

\*\*\_3RD PERSON P.O.V-\_\_\_\*\*

\*\*\_

"So," said T.K., " you're going to visit Tai and Sora today?"

Mimi nodded and looked up at him from trying to stuff her large duffel bag into the trunk of the rental car. " Yeah, we figured that if I had to leave the U.S. that the safest place for me to go, would probably here. And, we also reasoned, that if I had to return to Japan, the best people to go to, would be them." She looked back down at the bag as she continued speaking, " I don't plant to mention anything to them about my problem though." Her hands clenched into fists, scrunching up the material of the bag. "I won't say a thing. I don't want them to worry about me." She looked back up yet again, " You know how Sora mothers us all. I don't want to cause any of you any more pain than I already have. The absolute last thing that I want to do is cause anybody any more pain than I already have!"

She looked back down at the bag as though she was about to burst into tears.

"Don't worry," he said, slowly turning back to look towards the building, " Everything will work out. You'll see. In the end, everything will be fine."

She turned back towards him and gave a slow, tired smile. " I can only hope you're right. I can only hope."

\*\*\*

( \*\*A/N: Okay, I'm writing from this note on in short condensed form just so I can finish this. I'll try to make everything as conscise as possible without taking away from the story. Hey I know you're all probably mad at me for taking so long, but things on this end got a little tight and I couldn't get to the computer, then, there's the holidays, my birthday J and my Midterms, which I thought were hard. And of course, there were those days that I just didn't feel like writing. Just so you know, after I completely finish Rose, there is going to be a sequel, but I think that I'm either going to write the whole thing first then put it out, or write most of it first, put that out and finish the rest as I go along to avoid things like this in the future. K?）\*\*

\*\*

\*\*\*

### Everyone from the hotel is now at the houseâ€¦|

The door bell rang with a low, hollow sounding chime as though to futher emphasize the state of the occupants. It took several tries before there were any sounds of movement coming from inside the house. There were footsteps coming down the hall and sounds of a deadbolt being undone. When the door opened, it wasn't exactly the image that they had expected. Instead of seeing a cheerful young woman in her early twenties, they came face to face with a morose looking woman in her late sixties dressed in a black dress and carrying a rather large feather duster.

"Who are you bunch?" she asked in a hard, gravelly voice.

They couldn't restrain themselves. Everyone in the group except Mimi, who had agreeded to conceal her identity until it was evident that there were no spies around, gasped in shock. It wasn't that they suspected Tai and Sora, but Matt worried that their friends might be unknowingâ€¦|or perhaps unwilling accomplices.

" Sora?????????" they shouted, clearly shocked at the appearance of this old hag.

For a moment, the woman's eyes widened, whether in shock or regonition, no one could tell, but her expression soon resumed its previous appearance. She stuck the feather duster into a large pocket in her skirt before leaning across the doorway.

" I presume you're here to see the missus and her husband, then," she said, not moving aside from the doorway. Perhaps it was for the best that she didn't hear the large sigh of relief coming from the group in front of her. " Well, let me tell you something," she said waving a large finger at them, " they ain't in the condition to be seeing anybody right now. You best leave them alone."



"What happened?" Kari asked, concerned for brother and her sister-in-law. " Are they sick or something? Did they catch that new bug that's been going around?"

The woman folded two large arms across her chest and said quietly, " Well, it's not really for me to say, butâ€¦" she hesitated, " I don't really know if I should tell you this, but you look like a nice bunch. The missus was watching the television or something, and I was going about my business as usual. Then, the next thing I know, the missus tells me to go get her husband. She looked like she was about to have a nervous breakdown or something of the like. I did what she asked and fetched her husband. He closed the door behind him. I heard only little bits and pieces after that, but, from the way the missus was crying, I assume something awful musta happened." She stood up straight, but still remained in the doorway. " The missus is such a sweet woman. I was a friend of her mother's and when I ran into some hard luck, she offered to let me stay with her. I hate to see a good person like her in such pain. I wish there was something I could do to help, but I doubt that I can help if I know nuthin about what's going on."

Up till that point, the whole group had listened in silence, but now, the woman had finished speaking, so Matt asked her, " When was this? Was it today?"

The woman nodded.

"What time?"

" About 9:00, and they've been locked up in there ever since."

T.K. turned to Daisuke. " Daisuke, what time did we see that report?"

He seemed to consider the question. " Well, I woke up at 8:45 and I decided right away to go down for breakfast, but then I ran into Kari, we spoke briefly, then she went to get you and came back about 6 minutes later. Then she had the vision and ran off. It was just about nine when the broadcast was airing, so, yeah, I'd have to say about nine."

"So," said T.K. turned away, then to his brother. " It's what I thought."

" Right," said Matt, nodding slightly. He turned to the woman. " Listen," he said, " we're friends, close friends of Tai ad Sora. Could you tell them this, ' Hope is not lost. Friendship is eternal. There is always Light in the darkness. The Gate may not be open, and Sincerity is not lost yet we will go back through the Gate if it becomes necessary. We would need Courage and Love to survive the journey'."

The woman looked puzzled, but nodded and turned back into the house, closing the door behind her.

When the sound of her footsteps had vanished into the house, Matt turned to his brother. "T.K.," he said, "did you call Izzy and the others before we got here?"

" Yeah," he said as he nodded, " they should be getting here any minute now."

As if to further verify T.K.'s statement, a car pulled up in front of the house and another group of people stepped out of it. First, Ken stepped out of the car, followed by Miyako, then Iori, then Izzy and finally Joe. When Izzy stepped out of the car and spotted Mimi, he was about to greet her by her name, but Daisuke hissed at him to keep quiet. Joe took a hint and didn't say a word. Matt pulled them aside and explained to them that Mimi was going to remain known as Lin until they knew the coast was clear, and to say nothing to Tai or Sora that she might still be alive. They agreed. By this time, there were noises at the door again, but this time, instead of the old woman they had dealt with before, the door was opened by a very disconsolate looking Sora and an equally woebegone Tai.

" Tai! Sora!" screamed Kari, distressed at the sight of her brother in such a state. She ran up to him and hugged him tightly.

"Sora," said Kari as she turned to her sister in-law, " I guess you've heard."

Sora nodded mutely, before saying "I guess you have too."

Kari and everyone else nodded solemnly before saying, " We just heard this morning."

It was then that Sora noticed Lin at the back of the group. There was a flicker of recognition in her eyes, but that quickly died away. "Who's that?" she asked pointing at Lin, " does she know about what's going on with the Gate?"

" I'm a Digidestined from America," she answered in a quiet voice, " one of Michael's friends. I met up with Kari and the others a while ago." She paused. " Listen, I didn't know your friend personally, but, she was a Digidestined, so I share in your pain."

For a moment, Sora seemed to consider her statement, and when she didn't speak right away, Lin thought that she might not believe her, but when Sora nodded slowly, she let out a soft sigh. For a long while, the group simply stood in silence, but then Tai invited everyone in and offered them a seat, but as Lin passed him, she turned to thank him, but stopped. His glare was harsh and cold, not like the person she had known all those years ago. For a moment, she wondered if he suspected who she was, but decided to not react, but rather to let it go and she passed on into the house.

\*\*\*

### Laterâ€¦

Sora buried her tear stained face in her hands for a moment before continuing. " When I heard, Iâ€¦I just couldn't believe what was going on. My entire mind shut down. I meanâ€¦she was like a sister to me. Iâ€¦Iâ€¦" Her sentence trailed off into a bout of sobbing. Tai put an arm around his wife, more for his security than hers.

" And when she told me," he continued, " I couldn't believe it either. Even though we never talked much, she was still a friend because she was still one of us. I just can't believe it! After

everything we went through, all those battles we fought! Why did she have to die like that?! She deserved to live a long full life!"

" I know," said Sora under her breath. No one said anything for a couple of minutes, but Sora shot as much of a glare as she could muster in Matt's general direction, but he didn't seem to notice.

After a long while, Ken spoke, filling in the silence. " Things like this shouldn't happen to people like her. I remember, right after you defeated me as the Kaiser, when Golemon was going to destroy the dam, she was the only person besides Daisuke who trusted me enough to call me to help."

\*\*( Author's Note: I really envy Miyako in the following scene cause I'm a huge Ken fan. So, if the next scene comes out awful, you'll know why)\*\*

\*\*

" Now Ken dear," began Miyako gently, tears beginning to fall from her eyes " it's not that we didn't trust you then, it's just thatâ€¦|thatâ€¦|?"

" That what?" he asked, eyes growing misty.

" Nothingâ€¦|"

" What?"

" Nothing!"

At first he said nothing but then he said, " I'm hurt. My own girlfriend won't tell me anything."

She started blushing. Even though they had been going out for about two months, she still turned red when he called her his girlfriend.

" Ahem," interrupted Daisuke by clearing his throat rather loudly, " If you two lovebirds will break it up, we have more important things to deal withâ€¦|like what to do about Frank."

The name drew Tai's attention. " You mean Frank Wirani?" Daisuke nodded. " What's he got to do with all this?"

" You mean, you don't know?" said Matt, speaking for the first time in ages.

"No," stated Tai simply, turning towards his friend. " What?"

Matt gave a long, tired sigh, then said nothing for a few moments.

## Lin's ( well, actually Mimi, but anyways,â€¦|) POV-

Matt gave a long sigh then said nothing for a few moments. This was it. I had a gut feeling that the truth would more than likely come out with this statement. All we needed was their reaction to the fact and we would know what side they were on.

" Frank," he hissed clenching his fists in anger, " was Mimi's financeÃ©."

" I don't mean to sound disrespectful," said Iori, speaking for the first time in ages, " but, what does that mean in regards to herâ€|demise."

Daisuke shot him a look, but explained anyway. " I know they said how she died, but I know they didn't say how she wound up in the hospital."

" I think I have an idea," said Tai quietly.

Sora looked up at him. " How?" she asked.

" I remember something from the party," he said. " Do you all remember when the neighbors were complaining about us making too much noise?" That drew nods from everybody. " Well then, I suppose that you remember that Frank and I went outside to settle the problem." That was also affirmed by the others. Tai steepled his fingers and rested his chin on them, deeply in thought, as he delved into the memory.

\_"Keep it down over there!" a man shouted angrily.\_

—

\_" Young people these days have no kind of respect!" shouted a grandfather of one of the neighbors.\_

—

\_" I'll show you respect you old geyser!" shouted Frank as he rolled up his sleeves, prepared to fight. He stalked forward and grabbed one of the men by the arm and pushed him to the ground. He then turned around and grabbed another man's shirt collar and was just about ready to punch the living daylights out of him, but Tai put a restraining hand on his shoulder.\_

—

\_"Hold on, big guy, easy now," cautioned Tai. " We want to do this without fighting. Remember, we don't want to get the law involved."\_

—

\_" Who cares about the law," muttered Frank, " they won't be able to hurt me. I'm not scared of them."\_

—

\_"By now, everyone who was gathered outside of the apartment, was staring in utter shock.\_

—

\_" Frank," said Tai in a low voice, " I think you'd better go inside now. I'll handle this."\_

—

" That's what happened," said Tai. " I never thought to mention it before, because I figured that he was stressed about moving and all and was just blowing off a little steam. The neighbors seemed to think so too, because they didn't do anything either, but everyone was wrong. Something didn't sit right with me after that, I guess it was that, deep down, I knew that he was a truly violent person, but I didn't want to falsely accuse him." He gave a deep sigh. " I feel so guilty. I feel as though I was the one who actually killed her. If only I had said something sooner, she might still be alive today!"

" Tai," Matt began, " there was absolutely no way that you could've known that this was going to happen. I, on the other hand, knew that something like this would probably happen."

" What do you mean, Matt?" asked Iori, speaking for the first time in ages."

" Shortly after the party, just before Frank was ready to leave for New York, the guys in the band got together one last time. It was a while before I actually got to talk to him alone, but when I did, I discovered something really disturbingâ€|

— —

—

\_" So," Matt began, " how'd you like the party my friends put together?"\_

—

\_" I thought it was great," said Frank absentmindedly as he fiddled with the empty champagne glass.\_

—

\_" Yeah," said Matt, " Things will never be the same again. I mean, the old gang is split up now. It'll be awfully hard to get everyone back together for some time to come." He gave a short laugh. " I sound like the one who's going to be leaving." There was a short pause. " So, Frank, old friend, what'll you miss the most about Japan?"\_

—

\_Frank, lost in thought, fiddled with the glass a bit more before setting it down on the wooden bar. " I don't know exactly what I'll miss the MOST, but I know that there's something that I will miss."\_

—

\_" Oh?" asked Matt, his curiosity peaked. " And what might that be?"\_

—

\_Frank gave a short laugh before replying, " Well, there was this girl at the party yesterday, I think you know her."\_

\_

\_" Well ," he joked, " there were plenty of girls at the party and I know every one of them. You'll have to be more specific than that."\_

\_

\_" Do you know the girl who was wearing that mauve cocktail dress. You know the one who came in from New York. She has the shoulder length pink hair, big brown eyes and one of the finest bodies I've ever seen, and trust me, I've seen a lot."\_

\_

\_" I know who you mean," he said, shifting uncomfortably in his seat. He wasn't used to hearing any of his friends talked about like this.\_

\_

\_" Well," said Frank, " I've had my eye on her ever since she walked in the door yesterday, and I've wanted her ever since. I'd do anything to have her! Anything! There's no way she can resist. All alone, with no friends, yeah, she's gonna be desperate. There's no way she would refuse."\_

\_

\_" And what if she did?"\_

\_

\_Frank turned towards him and smiled evilly. " Trust me, my friend, she won't. I'll MAKE her love me."\_

\_

\*\*\_3rd Person P.O.V.-\_\*\*

\*\*\_

" From the moment I heard this, I knew something was wrong, but I didn't tell anybody. Why? I don't know. I truly don't know." He looked up and cast a glance in Lin's direction. He saw that she was looking rather sick and upset and he understood why. The way Frank had talked about her was absolutely sickening. When he turned back towards the group, he saw Tai throw a backwards glance in Lin's general direction. Their eyes met and Matt noticed that his eyes had grown cold. He couldn't help thinking that somehow, he suspected Lin.

Matt shook his head again. " To think, one of my friends is a murderer."

" He wasn't who he appeared to be," Tai said.

" Yeah, I just wish I could've known sooner. I can't help feeling that I could've prevented this."

At this, Tai stood up and began walking around his living room. He walked over to his fireplace mantelpiece and picked up the photo that had been taken shortly after Apocalymon's defeat. He held it up and scrutinized it. Turning towards Lin, he held up the picture as though to compare them. He placed it back before addressing Lin.

" Miss," he said to her, " Lin, I believe, tell us what you think about all this."

" Wh.what do you mean?" she asked, eyes wide.

" What I mean," he began, anger rising in his voice, " is that, one of our friends was murdered, a Digidestined at that, one whom you claim you empathize with, and you're sitting here, quiet calmly as though nothing is happening. Now, I'm going to ask you once, who are you?"

She gasped loudly. " I don't know what you mean!"

" Dammit!" he shouted, " don't try to fool me with that kind of crap! I know you're not who you claim to be! Whether you're a friend or not, I don't know, but I know that you're not some kind of innocent bystander! Now, I'll ask again who are you!?"

By now, she was in tears. The force of his voice reminded her all too well of Frank.

" Lay off it, Tai!" shouted Matt, concerned for his girlfriend. She had almost completely broken down, having fallen to her knees and weeping into the carpet.

" Who are you?!?" Tai demanded again.

" Stop it, Tai!" Matt said. "Leave her alone!"

Tai spun around. " Just whose side are you on anyway!?"

" I don't know what you mean," he stated in a low tone.

" You know damn well what I mean! Are you two working for Frank?! Cause if you are, you'll be dead before you can even make a sound."

Matt's blood began to boil and he was on the verge of saying something about not making idle threats, but instead, he remembered his earlier suspicions. " And how do I know that \_you're not on his side.\_"

—

"He was your friend not mine," he retorted simply.

" Do you think I'm happy about this?! Is that what you think?! Well, if so, then you're way off!"

" That's not what I meant."

" What \_did you mean then?"\_

—

" What I meant was, you knew him better than I did. You were closer to him than any of us. If anyone would be on his side, it would be you. Butâ€|since you are one of the Digidestined, just like she was, I don't think you would hurt her, let alone kill her." He turned back to face a shaken Lin. " But, she, on the other hand, claims to be a Digidestined, yet, no one here knows her. She says that she was Michael's friend, but there's no way to prove that now, since no one has any idea where he is. How do we know that she's not on Frank's side, that she's not one of his spies or something. Hell! How do we know that she didn't kill Mimi herself?!"

Matt reached his breaking point at that comment. He couldn't bear to remain under the burden of keeping the secret anymore, and he could tell that Daisuke, T.K., and Kari couldn't either. He decided that it was time to end this conspiracy of silence.

" She can't kill herself!" he shouted, unable to contain himself any longer.

\*\*\*~\*~\*\*\*

\*\*

\*\*All right, it's later, and everything's been explained to those who didn't know prior to the big revelation- ( I'm sorry I'm rushing this, but I just want to finish this. You're not really missing out on too much in that bit. I'll give you some tears, but I've left most of them out.)\*\*

\*\*

When Ken, Miyako, Iori, Tai and Sora had over-come their intial shock and had gotten past the tears, Mimi and the others took the time to explain everything that had happened. She told them about her first flight, then her flight to Florida, then back to Japan, and now to them. They omitted the part about the fight this morning, however, thinking that it might be best not to worry the others, considering the fact that she had almost been killed by Frank.

By the time they had finished her tale, it was already late into the night. Tai and Sora somehow convinced Mimi to stay with them for a while, and she agreed under the condition that the others could stay as well. They agreed ( and it was quite possible, seeing as how they lived in a large, mansion-like house.) and Mimi said that she was going to get her purse from the car. Ken agreed to help her and followed her outside to the car.

\*\*\_Mimi's P.O.V.\_\*\*

\*\*\_

The night air seemed unusually cold to me tonight, not that it should have bothered me. I don't know why it did, but it did. It chilled me to the bone and sent waves of shivers up and down my spine as I walked over to the car and unlocked it. I told Ken that the bags were in the trunk and he agreed to get them. I reached into the front seat





\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

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\*\*Disclaimer: Digimon doesn't belong to me, it belongs to Saban and Toei and all those now-filthy "rich people. Don't bother suing me, it's not worth it. Oh, BTW, Celeste and the concept of the guardians belong to me, so please don't steal.\*\*

\*\*

\*\*Author's note: All right, so I finally got this part out quicker than the last one. J Well, anywayz, Episode 4 is the "finale" to the Rose "saga". After this is done, there will be a sequel called after the Rainbow. One other thing, during the summer, keep an eye out for my Obelisk series, a separate Mimato fanfic, but that's not until summer. Also during summer, keep an eye out for my original monthly (or weekly depending on how much I write at a time.) series called "The Curse of the Crystal. It's completely original and I've been working on it for some while now. Thanx again for all the reviews. Here's a list a people I'd like to thank. There are all the good souls who gave me reviews as of February 18,2001. What I did was I took whatever name you guys put for "name" and I alphabetized them. Here's the list. Oh, wait a minute, by the way, if you don't see your name on here, remember that the last reviewer listed was the one from February 18,2001. Also, I've singled out four of you for a different list below. I owe all of you guys a great big thank you, and I'm sorry that I can't do anything else except finish this fic. Okay, now to the list.\*\*

\*\*

1. Ayeka
2. Alexh35
3. Allison Smith
4. Asher Kligfree
5. Ashieyu Zordak
6. Asuka
7. Belladova
8. Candis
9. Chbi Aniangell
10. Crystal Yumi
11. {Death}
12. Dori-chan
13. Garurumon
14. Gatomon\_1

15. Gyncks
16. "hello"
17. Ishida Tachikawa Mimi
18. Kayuna Akani
19. Kitten
20. Lady Icecubes
21. \*Lucky\*
22. Lucky Ishida
23. Mihaele Rose
24. Mimato
25. Nemesia
26. Omega Knight
27. Patamon Girl
28. Quilt
29. Seiitsu
30. Stargazer
31. Sumiki-chan
32. Sweety Swee
33. Tenshi no ai
34. Thms Rnd
35. And thank you to an anonymous reviewer

Thank you, everyone!!!!

Now, for the other listâ€¦

1. Musichick-Musichick, I'm sorry this took so long. When I went and read the reviews, I saw how many you left. How deep is that groove by now, hmm? Well, now you can put your feet up and take a well deserved break cause I finally got up off my lazy butt and worked on this. LOL! Thanx for being so patient!

2. Bliss-Truthfully, you inspired me to finish this fic. I had severe writer's block. After I read you Gemini Warriors trilogy, The Heir of Evil and it's sequel Realm Walker ( everyone, read those fics! They're much better than mine!), I just felt soâ€¦inspired! Don't worry tho. This fic still holds it's own if you know what I mean! I love your stories! They're awesome!

3. Dark Saint- I'm always glad to meet a fellow Ken fan! J Thanx! And

don't worry. Nothing will happen to Ken, nothing much anyway. \* evil grin\* But don't worry tho. Remember, he's my fave too.Oh, by the way, have you read Tortured Soul? It's under my author name and it's a Ken fic. \* jumps up and down in glee\* If you like it, lemme know cause I'll write a sequel just for you. K? Thanx again!

4. Digitally obsessed- if you're still even reading this (and I really don't know why you should bother yourself to) I thank you for your review all the way back on 6-17-2000. It was the very first one on FF.net. Also, I just want to say it again. I love your fanfics! Especially the Time Shifters series! I luv it!

All right, so I'm done with they dedications. Now I can get on with the ficâ€¦

[illegible]

## \*\* Episode Four: Resolution

[illegible]

\*\* Ken 's POV-

The first thing I was aware of upon returning to consciousness was a group of heavily distorted figures leaning over me. Jumbled thoughts raced through my mind and forced themselves into incongruous patterns. What had happened to me??? My head still swam, but I couldn't remember why at this particular moment. The last thing I remembered was being asked something that had to do withâ€¦

Of course! How could I be so stupid! ( \*\*A/N: I don't think you're stupidâ€¦|) I was outside at the car, helping Mimi with her bags, butâ€¦|something had happened, I just couldn't remember what. I had this nagging feeling that it was something that I wasn't going to like.\*\*

\* \*

Up until recently, I hadn't even known that she had a fiancée, let alone about Code Blue, but when I heard that she had died, something rang warning bells in my head. Still, though, I didn't know why. When she had confessed who she was, I still couldn't help feeling that she was hiding something from us. I looked across the room to Kari and our gazes meshed. From the deep frown upon her face, I knew that, not only did she know something was wrong, she also knew what it was. My question was if she knew that Mimi was hiding something, why didn't she say anything???? I knew the depths of darkness, and night and day that aura has haunted me. Although I knew that the past could never be erased, I felt that when I had returned to earth for the final time, I had left the evil persona behind. However, even now I still remain somewhat sensitive to it, and even now, evil's bitter taste lingers in my mouth. I could almost sense the evil radiating from someone in the room, though it lay dormant now, I knew that it was only a matter of time before the snake would rear its ugly head and disaster would strike.

" Back up," I heard a female voice say, " give him some room to breathe."

The clouded figures glided away from the couch I lay on, and I sat up, finding myself staring into my girlfriend's worried face. She wrapped her arms around my neck in a stranglehold, forcibly jerking me back to alertness. My arms wrapped around her, a reflex action I kept telling myself. "Oh God, Ken!" she cried. " I was so worried that he'd hurt you terribly! I thoughtâ€|" she released me from her vise-like grip and buried her teary face in her hands. " When I saw you unconscious like thatâ€|Iâ€|I THOUGHT HE KILLED YOU!!! I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!"

I gave her my trademark half smile before brushing some strands of her lavender hair out of her eyes. ( She had gotten rid of her glasses and gone for contacts instead.) " It's okay. He didn't and I'm fine." I smiled again before looking over her shoulder to the rest of the group. " For now, I do believe that we have more important things to worry about."

\*\*\_Matt's P.O.V.\_\*\*

\*\*\_

" For now, I do believe that we have more important things to worry about," stated Ken weakly.

\_Nah, not really, I thought bitterly, \_ my girlfriend's just been kidnapped by her psycho fiancÃ©e, that's all, no problem whatsoever!\_\_

—

I watched from a distance as the group drew closer together to begin to formulate a plan to rescue Mimi from her \_kidnapper. ( Although I must say, that he didn't seem to think a thing like attempted murder, stalking, kidnapping and assault were crimes. Truthfully, I feared what he might do next. I shuddered at the thought.) Turning away from the group, I sought solace in the shadows, isolating myself as I always did when I was in pain. Tears slipped out of my eyes, each one a silent testament to the inner torment that I felt. I had done it again, I had done it again, and this time, I wouldn't get a second chance. I felt so helpless! I didn't know what to do! Frustrated at everything, I punched the wooden hallway wall with all my might, a satisfied smile reaching my lips as the pain throbbed in my hand.\_

—

" You know, I don't think the wall would appreciate that," I heard a quiet voice behind me say. I didn't even have to turn around to know who it was. It brought to mind a scene from years earlier, something long buried.

" I let her down again. I let her down again, Sora! She trusted me to protect her, and I couldn't even do that right!" I shook my head. " She'll never trust me againâ€|" my voice trailed off, eventually dissipating into silence. For the longest time we stood in silence, and I had my back turned to her. Eventually, I turned to face her and leaned against the wall. We stood watching each other for the longest

time, but then I noticed a mischevious look play across her face, as though she had made some kind of decision. (\*\*A/N: It's not what some of you are thinking. . Remember! She's MARRIED! ( to Tai for those of you who didn't pick up on the HUGE hints.) And trust me, I know some people IRL who didn't.) She threw her shoulder length hair over her shoulder and prepared to stare me down. " Listen, Matt, there are two things you can do about this. Number one, you canâ€¦" \*\*

\*\*

I didn't give her a chance to finish, because I knew what was coming. " I don't want to hear it, Sora!" I exploded as I turned back towards the wall, vainly wishing that I could just melt into it, blend in, become a silent part of the background. " You don't understand, Sora! You'll never understand! She asked me to protect her, and I let her down!" I clenched my fists. " I mean, I failed her in Digiworld, I failed her when she left for New York, I failed her now!" I was almost frantic now, the tears falling shamelessly, " She trusted me and I let her down!" My eyes wandered to the floor. " I'm a complete and total failure."

She said nothing for the longest time, and I dimly wondered if she had left, but all doubts were cleared from my mind as I was roughly spun around. At first, I thought it might have been Tai, but I found myself staring into Sora's angry face. Her expression now reminded me of the one she shot me with after the whole Crest Energy ordeal, except, now she was older. So? So, it was ten times as bad! Truthfully, I didn't feel like having a fight with one of my closest friends, but I took a deep breath, and countered her glare. For a couple minutes, we stood like that, just glaring at each other. Then, she did something that I never thought she would. Her arm shot out and pain exploded across the left side of my face. For a couple seconds, I saw multitudes of brightly colored stars flash across my vision, and memories of this morning's "skirmish" were fresh in my mind. I was in complete shock. God, for a girl, she had a pretty powerful punch,â€¦but then again, considering who her husband was, she had learned from the best. Her eyes were fixed on mine, until a second later when we both cracked up into peals of laughter, between which, I managed to get out, " Thanks, I really needed that."

She straightened up and smiled at me. " You're welcome." She turned away to head back into the living room. " Come on, everyone's waiting."

I acquiesed with a silent nod.

\*\*\_3rd Person P.O.V.-\_\*\*

\*\*\_

" I don't remember much of what happened to me," Ken said, " One moment I was grabbing a suitcase, and the next, I woke up here, with all of you guys standing over me." He looked around the room, his face still pale from the vicious shock to his system.

Matt turned away from the group, the pain still showing plainly upon his face, as well as the now forming bruise.

" Are you sure you don't remember anything before waking up here?" he heard Miyako ask gently.

" Wellâ€¦" his voice trailed off, "other than the fact that both Mimi and I were out here and both of us were attacked with some kind of stun-gun, no."

" What about something like where he was standing, or what he was wearing?" prodded Joe.

Ken closed his eyes and tried to drag the memory into the light. He bit his lip as he always did when concentrating. He bit is so hard, that he drew blood. " Umm, heâ€¦he had his back to the streetlight, so I couldn't exactly see what he was wearing. However, I'm pretty sure he was wearing a dark colored trench coat, although I can't exactly be sure what color. Ummâ€¦" his voice trailed off again.

" What about objects? Did he carry anything except the stun gun?" asked Iori.

" What about scents? Did anything else stand out about him that might lead us to him?" asked Izzy.

" Well," began Ken, " I know he was carrying some rope, because when he first tried to attack me, I struggled, a bit and he tried to restrain me with this thick rope or something of the like. I don't know exactly what kind of rope, but its width was quite substantial, it wasn't like ordinary hardware rope, or twine, and I know it wasn't chain link. As for Izzy's question, there was something. Iâ€¦don't really know how to describe it, but when I ws struggling, I was nearly overcome by this foul smell. It was like a mixture of mold and mildew, you know, like rotting things. It also smelled somewhatâ€¦metallic. Almost maâ€¦"

He never got to finish his sentence, because Matt interrupted him. " I don't believe him," he stated blandly.

Everyone's jaws hit the floor.

" Whaâ€¦what do you mean you don't believe him?" Daisuke asked after recovering from his initial shock, " he's the best clue we have!"

" Hmmpf, if that's what you think! Then you're wrong! I believe he's a spy for Frank!"

( \*\*A/N: No, I am not making Matt seem like a perfect idiot just for the hell of it, tho that's what I normally do, I'm doing this for a completely different reason, and you'll see soon enough. )\*\*

\*\*

Everyone's jaws hit the floor again, but this time, they broke through the floor and headed for the center of the earthâ€¦

" Oh come on," began Tai tiredly, " not this again. I thought you \_understood that no one here is your, or her enemy. "\_

\_

" Affirmative," said Izzy, " the only enemy is Frank. We should concentrate on fighting him, not each other."

" You guys don't believe me," he stated without any emotion, " then listen to this and maybe you will. I mean, think about it. It was only those two out there, just him and \_my girlfriend. All of a sudden they're attacked, she's kidnapped, but he's left here, he wakes up, and just so happens to not remember anything at all." He turned and shot Ken an evil glare. " How convenient." \_

—

" He told us what he knows," said Tai, " you can't expect anything more from him. He's doing the best he can!"

" Whose side are you on anyway?" he growled through clenched teeth.

" Huh?" Tai began, taken aback. " Didn't we go through this already?" He gestured to everyone in the room, " Look, no one here is your enemy! Now either you calm down, or you leave!" Tai was silent for a moment. " Have I made myself clear?"

Slowly, Matt's face began to darken with anger.

T.K.'s P.O.V.-

Oh, great. It was happening again. The scene from this morning was playing out again, except this time with different people. I felt, rather than saw, Kari stiffen next to me, and I knew exactly what she was thinking, because the exact same thoughts were running through my and Daisuke's heads. I knew he knew because I looked across the room to him, and he had a grim expression upon his face. I turned to Kari and saw the recognition flash in her eyes. Sora, Izzy and Joe, stepped forward to aid Tai while Kari, Daisuke and I moved to act as seconds to them.

Kari's P.O.V.-

I could feel a sense of unease in my stomach, sitting there like a leaden ball, bringing me pain every second. I knew that it had something to do with the premonition that I had had back at the hotel, yet it was totally unrelated. I was filled with this uncontrollable fright. I don't know what I was to be afraid of, but I knew that it was here. It was at the hotel as well. I knew that it lay dormant somewhere, in someone. It was the same dark feeling that I had felt when at the dark ocean in the phase warp, the dark digital realm. I looked to my left for a sign of recognition from Ken or Miyako. I knew that he'd know what this was, seeing as how both of them had also been exposed to the darkness. T.K. turned to me, and I knew that he knew as well. All for the better, we had more people to fight than I had originally thought.

Daisuke's P.O.V.-

\_Great, I thought, \_ just great. They're fighting each other when they should concentrate on rescuing Mimi, butâ€¦ Oh never mind, these people screw things up too much! At the rate they're going, with an argument every five minutes, they'll be here arguing until tomorrow night! And then they'll definitely be too late to save her. Fools. " What should I do?" I asked the empty air around me, not being heard by anyone because no one was listening to me. ~\_Play along for now.



Wait until the time is right. You'll know your cue when you see it.~  
was the reply he received. He looked over to where Kari was sitting,  
and frowned to acknowledge his knowledge (\*\* A/N: That sounded  
strangeâ€¦) of what was going on, before moving with T.K. and Kari to  
act as seconds to Sora, Izzy and Joe.\*\*\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\*\* Tai's P.O.V.-

"Listen dude," I began with my usual calmness ( at least I thought  
so), " you're only a guest in my home. If you don't calm down, so  
help me, I'll kick you out, and you know I will."

Matt gave me one of those evil smiles that chilled me to the bone.  
There was something in his aura, something that triggered the  
memories of the fight they had back when we were younger, after Matt  
had been convinced by Puppetmon that \_I was his enemy. God knows that  
I would have paid a million dollars in gold never to see that look  
again. It chilled me, but I didn't flinch.\_

—

" Tai, Tai, Tai," he began, slowly shaking his head at me, " I could  
have killed you when I was a kid, imagine what I'll be able to do  
now."

" How dare you," my wife growled through clenched teeth. She started  
forward, but Joe and Izzy held her back. She struggled against their  
grasp. " Let me go!" she yelled at them, struggling even harder. Then  
she turned to Matt. " So help me, when I get loose, you're going to  
be sorry you were ever born!"

" Don't worry about it, dear," I said without turning around. I felt  
her hostile, bristling aura shrink a bit, and I knew that she calmed  
down a bit. I turned around to cast a glance at her, but when I turned  
back around, pain exploded across the side of my face. Fog began to  
gather in my head, and I tasted warm, coppery blood in my mouth. Now  
he had done it. Now, he was going to pay!

Without another word, I launched myself at him with my fist aimed at  
his head. He seemed surprised that I would actually retaliate and  
therefore was unprepared. I saw the look of fear spread upon his  
face, but it was too late to stop . I closed my eyes and thought,  
\_I'm sorry. It seemed that I waited an eternity for the hit to  
actually occur, and I bet you that if I had kept on waiting, I would  
have probably waited indefinitely.\_

—

Through the clouds in my mind, I heard Daisuke yell, " Stop it now,  
you fools!"

Now, about a minute after, I actually opened my eyes and turned to  
look at him, and when I did, I was dumbfounded. I wanted to rub my  
eyes to make sure I was seeing right, but I found that I couldn't  
move anything below my neck. I was paralyzed. Now, that would have  
shocked me immensely, if it hadn't been for what was happening to  
Daisuke. Was it just me, or was he \_glowing?\_

—

Daisuke's P.O.V.-

When Tai attempted to punch Matt, I knew that was my cue, the cue she had told me to wait for. Now was the time to act. Oh, no one except me knows how long I waited to act, and now, I finally could. With the greatest relish, I yelled out in my loudest voice, " Stop it now, you fools!" I knew everyone would turn to look at me when I did, but I could have cared less. I raised my hand up, temporarily paralyzing Tai and Matt both. I felt a warm, golden glow envelop me, and I knew that now \_was the right time for me to act. Everyone in the room was looking at me as though they had seen a ghost, but I knew that Kari and T.K. knew what was going on. They had both sensed it from the very beginning, but had said nothing. They knew my biggest secret ( for the time being). They knew my true identity. They knew that I was a guardian.\_

—

\*\*\_3rd Person P.O.V.-\_\_\_\_\*\*

\*\*\_

By now, everyone had noticed Daisuke'sâ€|unusual behavior, and everyone was scratching their heads for an answer, but no one knew what was going on. Well, at least, that's what most thought. Kari and T.K. moved to stand on either said of Daisuke, acting as his seconds. When the golden glow subsided, Daisuke's form had been replaced by that of a young man in his early twenties, dressed in a drab, cadet blue jumpsuit with an insignia like a starburst on one side. His hair was still brown, but it was better kept, combed into a neat hairstyle. His eyes were of a piercing sapphire color.

T.K., meanwhile, moved behind Kari and placed his hands on her shoulders as a sign of support, because they both knew that she was going to undertake a very difficult task. She was going to have to surrender her body to a guardian, and it was not an easy task ( in fact, if someone wasn't there with you it would be very painful when you collapse). She closed her eyes and mumbled something under her breath, and after a few seconds, the crest of light appeared on her forehead again. This time though, it dissipated and washed over her body, soon filling the room with a brilliant, blinding light.

When the light faded, Kari, T.K. and the unidentified man were still there, but Kari and T.K. had collapsed to the floor, seemingly out cold.

Tai, at the sight of his sister began to struggle against the phantom grasp. " Let me go!" he yelled at the man.

" No," he said simply.

Tai opened his mouth to say something, but Matt interrupted him. "Leave them be, they'll be fine."

" What do you mean?"

" You'll see."

Two agonizing minutes later, the previously still forms on the floor began to stir. T.K. stood up first before aiding Kari to her feet.

They both seemed to be normal at first glance, but, when they talked, it soon became apparent, that they were not who they seemed to be. (In reality, they had undergone a transformation of sorts, just less drastic than Daisuke's if you get what I mean.)

(\*\*A/N: Just so you know, they aren't possessed by evil spirits or something like that. They are possessed by good spirits as you will soon see, and oh yeah, this is the reason why Daisuke was acting so weird earlier. Also, until further notice, when I say, T.K. and Kari, it's the possessed forms.\*\*)\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*

When Kari was standing, the unidentified man and T.K. saluted her in a way typical of a military organization.

" At ease," she said in a melodic voice. Immediately, they relaxed. She cast a sad eyed glance in Ken and Miyako's direction before stepping back and allowing the other man to speak.

" Greetings," he said, " my name is Justin, and I'm a guardian in-training, under Celeste." He gestured to Kari.

" Ceâ€|Celeste?" stammered Izzy. " Prodigious! She and Kari have entered into a symbiotic relationship in which, up until now, Kari has remained dominant, but in times of need, Celeste or one of her allies has become the dominant psyche, guiding us through danger, and now she's here to help up again!" \*\*( A/N: I have absolutely no idea what I just said. Hey, it \_sounded smart.)\_\*\*

\*\*\_

Everyone ,except for Ken and Miyako who actually \_understood what he was saying, simply sweatdropped and nodded their heads pretending they knew what was going on.\_

\_

" Don't even bother trying to understand what was just said," snapped Celeste angrily, " just know that he's right about it."

" Yes," said T.K., " fury barely contained in his voice. He turned to Celeste. " I don't believe that \_these are the people whom you claimed were so absolutely brilliant!"\_

\_

" Shut up, Quinn," she snapped again. " You are not the one to pass judgement on them. They are the Light Figures of this Dimension. Regardless of what you say. Granted, they have made their mistakes, but after all, theyâ€|and we are only human. Understood?"

" Understood," said Quinn and Justin.

" That's all well and good," said Sora, " but, Celeste, why are you here?"

She gave an indignant laugh. " Ha! Fools, I'm here to protect you, of course."

There was a tense pause. " Protect us from whom?" Matt asked, wrestling with all manners of emotions.

Celeste waved her hand in the air and Matt was sent flying across the room ,landing against the wall with a painful thump. " Why from yourselves of course! I was such a fool to think that you people would actually carry this out right." She turned to Matt again. " Didn't I warn you guys to be careful and not to let your guard down! But do you listen to me?"

" You said no such thing to us!" he countered.

She paused for a second before speaking again. " Even if I didn't, you, Mr. I'm Da Man, should have been smart enough to figure that out for yourself! Tell me! As deluded as this guy is, do you think that just because you crossed an ocean means that you've escaped him?! Obviously not! He is smarter than that, and I'm warning you now, he is obviously \_much smarter than you think he his! Be forewarned, that man is a snake! And if you treat him lightly, you \_will get bitten!" She now turned to the rest of the group. " And as for you! This is no time for you to be fighting amongst yourselves! You should be concentrating on finding Mimi before it's too late!"\_\_

—

" What do you mean, 'before it's too late'?" asked Miyako cautiously.

" Exactly what it sounds like, 'before it's too late'." She paused, debating whether or not to divulge the information that she so carefully guarded. " All I can tell you is this. Something awful, something terrible is about to happen to her by the hand of Frank. Exactly what, I can't say. I don't even know how to classify it. Physically, it's not life threatening, but emotionally, and psychologically, it is devastatingâ€¦"

She didn't even get to finish what she was saying, when she was interrupted by Matt. " Well then, let's stop talking and go find her! I know that you know where she is! So then tell us! And we'll make Frank pay!"

" Oh," she said in a mocking tone, " now you're ready to fight, but you still have no idea what I was going to say, now do you?" There was angry silence from the other end. " Well then, I suggest you hold on for a second. As I was about to say, what's going to happen will be devastating to her, and there is nothing you can do to stop it." Sora opened her mouth to protest, but Celeste raised a hand, cutting her off before she could even start. " Yes, you heard right. There is nothing you can do to stop this, even if I told you where she was, and you left now. There is no possible way. You will have to wait for an hour, and let things play out on that end."

" Why?" blurted out Joe.

" Because, like I said, there is no way to prevent what is about to happen, but there is a way to prevent something worse from happening. If you intervene too soon, especially at this time, you all, even though you were trying to save her, you would ultimately cause her true demise." There was a heavy pause, as an angry, bitter rain began to fall. " You see, after what is supposed to happen has happened, he

will let his guard down, allowing you the brief opportunity to save her. Right now, he is on full guard, just waiting for you to act brashly so he can have an 'excuse' to kill her." She turned back to Matt. " I know you have a personal score to settle with him, but you must, at least in the beginning, retain your self control. It would do her no good if you go in there demanding things of him, because it is she who will suffer for your anger. You and all the others must be organized and surreptitious about how you rescue her. There is no room for error. Once he knows that you know where he is, he'll attempt to kill her if you leave there without her. You must plan this entire thing out, and account for every possible reaction. While I know that this sounds impossible, look at it this way, if I didn't think that you all could do it, I wouldn't even ask it of you. That is all that I am allowed to say."

" What do you mean? Aren't you going to tell us where she is?" asked Matt impatiently.

" Haven't you been paying attention to what I've been saying?! I can't do that because you can't go there right now, otherwise, sheâ€|"

" I've listened to that, but why don't you tell us that, then let us wait an hour?"

" Trust me, I know you won't. Besides, even I have my orders." She paused again. " Trust me, the longer you wait the better. The better your plan will be, the more ready you will be, the more clues you will find to her whereabouts. But, heed this warning, you must find her before the next sunrise, or else, she will die."

Quinn stepped forward. " As for when you will actually leave to look for her, AFTER you have devised a suitable plan, I will aid you, but I will only drop clues, it is up to you to decipher them."

" As for me," said Justin, " I will be there to help you when you will need it the most.

" And now, " said Celeste grimly, " I'm afraid that we must leave you, for we have orders that shall take us elsewhere, but we will be there when you need us. Farewell."

With that, the three guardians were again enveloped by a blinding light, and when that light subsided, it left the unconscious forms of the three Digidestined. Tai, who by this time had been 'cured' of his 'paralysis' walked over to his sister and placed her, along with the other two, on the large window seat at one end of the room.

" Well," Sora said shakily, " I guess that we'd better do what Celeste suggested and come up with a plan." Swallowing the developing lump in her throat, she turned to Izzy. " Izzy, are you up to it?"

He said nothing, only nodded as he procured his laptop from its case. All the people in the room who were able, drew around the table where the computer was, formulating a plan, and all trying to shake off the feeling of impending doom that hung over them.

Mimi's P.O.V.-

The world around me, slowly became visible, but everything was clumped together, forming an indistinguishable blur of colors that continuously swam and swirled around randomly making me feel as though I was about to be sick. Nothing made sense at this point in time; my head swam with fuzzy images and faint memories. Truthfully, right now I felt as though I had been shot in the back of the head—but without the disastrous consequences. My entire body ached, but there was a sharp throbbing pain radiating from my wrists and shoulders, both of which felt as though they were about to break. It was then that I realized that I could feel nothing above my wrists. I turned my head upwards only to cause myself unnecessary pain. My hands were still in one piece though, but they were tied so tightly together with metal chains, that all blood flow was cut off.

Then, out of nowhere, something collided with my back causing my body to snap forward stretching my arms and shoulders to the limit. I would have screamed, but the hit had knocked the wind out of me.

Now dazed and thoroughly confused, the throbbing pain in my head intensified. I wanted to look around for the cause of the blow, but I was too thoroughly disoriented and dazed. That's when it happened. Shadows began to move around me, in a ghostly dance, almost cultish before finally coming to a halt. The shadows—no, not shadows, they—they were smaller versions of something I had seen before and remembered all too clearly. The feeling of desolate coldness surrounded me again, and I struggled to rise above, but I couldn't. This time I really was alone. There was no Celeste to help me. This time I would have to face my own inner—and outer demons alone. Alone, with no one to help me. The one directly in front of me raised one of its tri-clawed limbs towards me and was only about an inch away when it suddenly halted. I drew in a breath and tried to pull as far away from it as I could when it turned back to face me, leering at me, its evilly crimson eyes burning into my soul. Suddenly, I felt a heavy thump against my chest and I realized something had fallen under my shirt. At first, I had no idea what it could have been, but I had a feeling that I'd find out soon enough. The horrid gaseous being reached forward again, and it almost touched me, but then I felt the warm glow of energy against my skin, and I now knew what it was that was now around my neck, my crest. It activated with a radiant explosion of emerald light, repulsing all of the demons around me, sending them scuttling for the shadows to regroup. A second later, the light faded and the crest went cold beneath the silk of my shirt and laid leaden against my heart. How I wished that it could provide me with more help by allowing me to become the Soldier again, but I knew that that was impossible. Gennai had said that there was no more Crest Energy available to me—or to anyone else, meaning that my beloved Knight wouldn't be able to save me this time. —

—

I looked up and saw that demons advancing towards me yet again, but this time, instead of moving to surround me, they seemed to be melding together to form one single being. This new thing halted about five feet from me before vanishing into the ground, leaving me alone in the darkness. Well—at least I thought I was alone.

A door that had been concealed by the blanket of darkness opened,

flooding the room with a blinding light, causing me to wince and close my eyes as they had failed to adjust to the sudden illumination. A figure stood in silhouette in the doorway, but soon became identifiable as my eyes adjusted. Standing in the doorway was someone I knew. Someone whom I had a faint recollection of knowing. Someone from a long time ago. Someone, I never thought I wanted to see againâ€¦|

\_Flashbackâ€¦|\_

—

" I can't take it anymore, Eric!" I cried, all the frustration and stress of the past two years finally catching up with me. " First, not only do I find funds for this week's shoot missing from my account, under mysterious circumstances might I add, but now, I come back here, only to find this!" I gestured angrily to the woman who now cowered by his side. " What the hell's going on, Eric, I thought we trusted each other in this relationship!"

He stood there, just staring me down, but the anxiety he felt inside was plastered across his face. " Now, sweetie, " he began tentatively. " Why don't you calm down, and we'll sit down and talk this over." He smiled one of his smiles, that under other circumstances, I would have found reassuring, but now, it made my blood boil. " What do you say to that?"

I just lost all control at this point. " CALM DOWN!!!!!!! DON'T YOU TELL ME TO CALM DOWN YOUâ€¦|YOUâ€¦|JERK!!!!!!! HOW DARE YOU EVEN SPEAK TO ME NOW! HOW DARE YOU EVEN THINK THAT I'M GOING TO CALM DOWN! WHAT RIGHT DO YOU HAVE NOW, TO ASK FORGIVENESS OF ME!" I paused, uncertain of what to say next. I hurt to be mad at him like this. Him, Eric Aril ( forgive the gay name peoplez, I couldn't come up with anything better L ), my manager, my flame. Right now, despite what had just occurred, I still loved him, everything about him, the way he always kept his too-long henna colored hair in a ponytail that made his head seem to small for his body, and his ears too large for his head, the way his hazel eyes sparkled with mirth and mischief everytime he laughed. Damn, I still loved him, but right now, my anger was far too strong for me to ignore, and it overpowered any other feelings that might have surfaced. I took a deep breath, and gathered my thoughts before I spoke again, and when I did, my voice, instead of a shout, came out as a barely audible whisper. " Get out, " I ordered. " Get out now, and take your \_friend with you. Obviously she pleases you more than I do. Go on, get out, and never come back. I never want to see your damn face again!" I added force on all the " nevers" just to make sure he got the point, but it seemed that he hadn't.\_

—

" Come on, baby, sweetie, darling," he said, trying to butter me up like a piece of toast, " you can't mean that. I mean, \_think about what you're saying. You just can't mean it."\_

—

" I do mean it, Eric. \_I do. Speaking of which, do you even recognize those words? \_I do? Well, just in case you don't, let me tell you. They were the words that we were to say at our wedding! \_Our wedding!

You know, that thing, that big event that's a few month from now!" I held up my hand, showing him the substantial diamond that was on the ring. " Do you even remember this ring?" I looked down at it sadly before looking back up at him and tearing the ring off of my finger and hurling it at him. He caught it and gasped in surprise.\_\_\_\_

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" Whaâ€|what are you doing?" he gasped.

" What I should have done a long time ago. Go on, take back your filthy ring and give to your friend there. I don't want it anymore, and I don't want you either! So, get out now, or I so swear, I'm calling the cops and having you arrested."

" You can't do that," he smirked, some courage coming back to him.

" You wanna bet?" A look of fear suddenly crossed his face as he realized that I wasn't bluffing. Hurriedly he stood to his feet, and, dragging his new girlfriend with him, stormed out the apartment door, slamming it shut with a loub bang. When I heard his angry footsteps recede into silence, I collapsed to the floor, my body trembling. " Lights out," I said simply as the lights in my apartment switched off one by one, soon leaving me in the darknessâ€|alone. I collapsed to the thick carpet and began to cry into it, unable to contain my hurt any longer. I wasn't crying because of losing my manager, or having to cancel the shoot, which I had in fact been looking forward to, or even the fact that Eric was going out there with some other woman to spread vicious rumors about me, or the fact that those rumors would soon be spread across the front page of every tabloid from New York to California. Hell, I didn't even care if the entire world believed them and hated me for the rest of my life. The reason that I was crying was simple. I was alone, and that was a state of being that I hated more than anything elseâ€|

End flashbackâ€|

" Oh my God! Eric!" I breathed weakly, and with some difficulty because I was having trouble breathing for some reason. He still looked somewhat similar to how I remembered him, considering that it had been five years since I last saw him. His hair was still the same color, though now, finally, he had cut it. He had grown in height slightly, but he had lost a considerable amount of weight, and that was somewhat disturbing seeing that he he was already somewhat lanky to begin with. But, the most startling difference was in his eyes, no longer did they sparkle with the spirit that I had loved in him all those years ago, but now they were dull and lifeless, as though covered by a film of soap.

"Hello, Mimi, " He said dully, as though he were talking about the weather, and not noticing that I was suspended from something with a metal chain by my wrists and I was in danger of passing out because of lack of oxygen. \_Geez, I thought,\_ I've seen stones with more brains than he's got, but oh well, I might as well try to get him to help me. \_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

" Uh. Eric." I began sweetly, " it's nice to see you and all, but ,



just so you know, I've been kidnapped and am being held here against my free will by my ex-fiancee, and I would really, really appreciate it if you could just get me out of here, cause, you know, I really think he's going to kill me when he gets here." I just couldn't control the dripping sarcasm in my voice, nor could I control the shock I felt when he answered.

" I'm sorry, Mimi," he said plainly, " I can't do that."

" Wha..what do you mean, 'you can't do that?'"

" Just what he said," said another familiar voice, this one far more menacing than Eric's. Every fiber of my body instinctively quivered in fear. \_Oh my god, no!\_

" Hello baby," he said, mocking me.

" Frank," I breathed, my voice belaying all the fright that was welling up inside me.

" Bingo," he sneered. His gaze lingered on me for a tense moment, and with a sense of dread growing inside my heart, I noticed his eyes slide down my figure before he looked back at my face, his eyes leering at me, just like those of the demon I had seen before. " I have plans for you later," he said with a vicious smirk, " but for now!" He turned towards Eric and began ordering him to do something in a low tone. That gave me a few moments to think. I knew that I couldn't free myself from these chains because they were tied too tightly. I looked around to see if there was anything that could help me fight Frank probably, a weapon or something along those lines, but there was nothing in sight. \_Just great.\_ I thought, \_Aries! Celeste! Matt, where are you? \_

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A few minutes later, Frank and Eric were still deep in conversation, although from the look on Eric's face, I'm sure he didn't like what Frank was saying, and I'm deadly sure that I wouldn't like it either. Then, from out of nowhere, a stray thought crossed my mind. Whatever happened to those demons? Why were they here? What did they represent? I just knew that something bad was going to happen, and probably to me at that. Now, if the situation hadn't been so utterly grim, I would have laughed. I was starting to sound like Joe.

Then, Frank turned back to me, and smirked again. I watched my hopes dwindle as Eric vanished into the darkness. Then, Frank stood in front of where I was hanging, giving me that damn smirk again. I swear, if I wasn't tied up right now, I'd wipe that smile off of his face with a good solid punch. And suddenly I was falling. The ground was rushing towards me, and I was dimly aware of the sound of machinery in the background. Lucky for me, the vertical distance wasn't too long. I hit the ground with a heavy thump, dazed and sore, but not otherwise injured.

" Oooh," said Frank satirically, " you're not hurt are you?"

" No," I growled through my clenched teeth, " I'm fine." I hoped that by observing the niceties, no matter how grudgingly, I would keep him talking, and the longer I kept him talking, the more time that would give my friends to rescue me.

" Oh, good," he said, the viciousness I feared in him edging into his voice, " I would have hated for that little fall to hurt youâ€|when I can do it all the better." He leaned over, his face just inches from mine. I could feel his breath on my face, and I began to shiver in fear. Our eyes met, and for a moment, just for a single moment, the malicious look in them faded and I swear, I saw his true soul. It was saying \_I'm sorry. Forgive me.\_ That's when I realized it. That's when I realized why the demons were here. But, before I could think anything further, the front of my silk blouse was ripped open, and my crest torn from around my neck. He reached forward and grabbed my neck, kissing me roughly and forcefully. \_No!\_ my mind screamed. \_No! You can't do this to me! You don't have my consent! You can't! You can't!\_ When he pushed me away, it took me a second to catch my breath before I spat out, " What are you doing?!"

He leered evilly. " Just claiming what's mine. Just claiming what's mine." With those words, he heaved me bodily across the room into a dark corner where I landed on my side. I looked up, my eyes filled with an undeniable fear, and saw him advancing menacingly towards me. I curled up in as small a ball as humanly possible as I whimpered, " Noâ€|please noâ€|" my voice cracking every few words and tears falling down my face, endless in source.

" Eric!" he called, " restrain her! I'm going to have some fun with her."

Eric stepped forward from the shadows, and grabbed the chain that tied my hands, yanking it upwards and uncurling me from my fetal position. " Noâ€|" I whimpered again.

" I'm sorry, Mimi," I heard him say softly. " I really am. I had no idea he was going to do this to you. Can youâ€|" his voice trailed off, but I knew what he was saying.

" I forgive you, Eric, \_I do.\_"

" Thank you."

" Enough talking!" bellowed Frank, as he leered down at me, his face contorted with a kind of cruel pleasure. Then all conscious thoughts were lost as my mind receded into the protection of the coma-like darkness within it. I knew what was happening to my physical body. I knew that I would neverâ€|no could never be the same again, but here in the darkness, I knew my mind at least would be safeâ€|well, at least I thought so. With the knowledge that my crest was gone, I felt that I didn't have enough power within me. To tell the truth, I felt that because of this, I would no longer be worthy to possess my crest, to ever have been the soldier of the princess, to ever have been truly loved, or to ever be truly loved again. I felt underserving of anything except pain and darkness, the pain and darkness that I knew was coming. As my mind slipped into the cradle of darkness, I was able to make one last conscious thought. I felt that if, right now, I could hold on to hope, perhaps I might yet be saved, so I prayed. I prayed to whatever god might be listening for someone to stop Frank, for someone to save me from this shame. My last thought, my last hope wasâ€|\_Matt, where are you?\_

\*\*\_3rd person P.O.V.-\_\*\*

**\*\*Place, unknown\*\***

A woman of about twenty sat behind the circular desk, reading a report and occasionally brushing a few strands of silver hair out of her icy blue eyes. She was dressed in a long bluish silver dress with a long skirt that tapered off around her ankles. She had much jewelry adorning her wrists and fingers, two large opals hanging from golden earrings, and one particularly interesting pendant that hung on a silver chain around her neck. On the other side of the desk stood a very nervous looking Celeste. The woman behind the desk, when she had finished reading, she set the metal device down with an angry thud.

" Twenty-nine dimensional infractions in ONE day to save ONE person! You've really blown it this time, Celeste," her voice was full of forced calm, but the angry shone clearly in her eyes. " Now, if you were doing this to save an entire planet, this report might just have gotten lost, or may never have been filed at all, but for ONE person." She sighed heavily. " Celeste, I've given you a lot of freedom around here. After all, you are the Prophecy Incarnate, but I just can't overlook it. What do you have to say for yourself."

" Elder, I just couldn't let Mimi die in the coma. I couldn't let her be killed by the assassin or Frank either. I just \_couldn't\_! Elder, after all, you do know that she is my Sister Crest! I just couldn't let her die!"

" Yes, Celeste," sighed the Elder wearily, " I know howâ€|attached you are to your Sister, and the point isn't that you were to let her die eitherâ€|"

" Then what \_is\_ the point?!" yelled Celeste, roused to something like passion.

" The point is!," said the Elder forcefully, standing up to add emphasis to her words, " is that you could have been more surreptitious about it! They orders you gave your subordinates are just preposterous! I mean, sending in Aries to dispatch the assassin, you going in person to protect your Sister, sending Taurus, Scorpio and Libra to that diner! Celeste, if you don't think more carefully about your orders, I'm going to have to demote you!"

\_Demote me!\_ She wanted to scream. \_ You can't demote me! I am the Prophecy Incarnate!\_, but she held herself in, and remained under stressed silence.

At that moment, the double doors of the office burst open and a messenger dressed in a blue jumpsuit dashed in and whispered fiercely to the Elder, panic and concern splashed across his face.

Celeste, knowing something was hideously wrong, and having the dread feeling that it was something to do with her Sister, immediately asked, " What's wrong?!" fear and panic rising within her.

Suddenly, the Elder turned to her, and, no longer furious, but concerned said, " You've got to go back. Your Sister is in grave danger, more so than anyone thought. It turned out that the demon you destroyed wasn't the only one who infiltrated that time stream. There is an extremely large concentration where your Sister is being held, and they're pushing for her destruction. You've got to get there and

stop them now! Don't let anyone else know about this. That means, don't take anyone with you. You'll have to do this on your own. You have been authorized to use whatever force is necessary." She gave a weak smile, but it didn't reach her eyes. " If you succeed, this report might just find its way into the garbage disposal."

" Thank you, Elder," said Celeste as she bowed stiffly.

" Dismissed. Now, hurry, Celeste."

Celeste said nothing more as she turned and hurried out of the room. She ran down an ornately decorated corridor, shoving people out of the way as she went, ignoring their angry shouts. Her mind was focused on one thing, and one thing only. \_Mimi, pleaseâ€|please be all rightâ€|\_

\*\*\_3rd person P.O.V.-\_\*\*

\*\*-Place: Tai/Sora's house.\*\*

The hour had passed as though time had slowed to a halt, but the Digidestined at least had a plan. They had decided worked out who would do what. Tai, Matt, Ken and Daisuke would actually confront Frank. Sora, Kari and Miyako would go for help because, as Tai had pointed out, Frank probably took her somewhere where access to help was not easy to find. That left Izzy, Joe and T.K. to protect Mimi during the fight. Joe was there because it was more than certain that she would need a doctor. They had brainstormed during the tense hour, and they finally felt as though they had accounted for every possible reaction, and Joe pointed out that Celeste's prediction had come true, they had been able to, and he was sure that the feeling of fulfillment was actually Celeste's way of telling them that the plan was good.

When the Grandfather clock in the hall chimed, announcing that the hour had past. Everyone bolted out of the house, barely stopping to grab their coats before hurrying out into the rain-filled street. Ken had revealed to them what he was saying before he had been interrupted by Matt, that he thought the odor surrounding Frank to be marine. Since there was only one warehouse district by the sea within the radius that Izzy had calculated Frank to have taken Mimi to, they had some idea where to go. They decided that it might be too obvious to take a car, so they had to go on foot. They decided to take the back streets and, even though it was raining buckets, they decided to go on foot. It was quicker anyway. The streets were just beginning to darken when they all stepped outside. They decided to go in two's so as to look less suspicious. Tai and Daisuke left first, then Ken and T.K., then Izzy and Joe, then Sora and Iori, then Kari and Miyako. Lastly, Matt was left alone standing in the rain on the deserted street, the very street from which his girlfriend had been kidnapped and taken, more than likely, to her death. As much as he didn't want to think about it, the possibility kept forcing itself in his mind. She \_could\_ be dead. As much as he didn't want to, that might turn out to be a possibility that he had to face. But, to counter that, he had stuck to a mantra, and he kept telling himself that she was okay, that she wasn't dead. However, that only served to make him more anxious. When it was his turn to leave, he cast a glance back at the house, wishing that they could all still be inside together, but he shook the thought away, knowing that wishing wouldn't do himâ€|or her any good. As he turned to walk away into the darkness, to follow Kari

and Miyako, one thought forced its way into his mind. \_Mimi,\_ he  
prayed, \_please be all right.\_

TO BE CONTINUEDâ€¦|

\*\*( A/N:\*\* Guys, you don't know how absolutely difficult it was for  
me to write this part. Not because it was long, but because of the  
content. It pulls at my heartstrings to do this to these characters.  
( yes, I have a heartâ€¦|) So, well, the next and final part should be  
out soon, oh, and just to clarify some things.

- The reason Celeste calls Mimi her Sister, is because Celeste's  
crest ( yes she has a crest) is the crest of truth, and since  
sincerity is a form of truth, they're sister virtues, the crests are  
sister crests, and the bearers become Sisters.

- Okay, the last thing to clarify is that the Elder is Celeste's  
superior, but Celeste is actually stronger than the Elder. Celeste is  
called the Legend Incarnate because in my book that I'm working on,  
there is a legend and it talks about a powerful being. Celeste is  
that powerful being and she's the embodiment of the legend. That's  
why she's called the Legend  
Incarnate.\*\*)\*\*

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End  
file.